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THE BRIEFS
CATTLE DECAPITATION
THE FAINT
FURTHER SEEMS FOREVER
HELLOOOOOBYE
HOT ROD CIRCUIT
LIMITPOINT
MISERY SIGNALS
PLAY PRETTY FOR BABY
PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS
SILENT DRIVE
TAKING BACK SUNDAY
Terror
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ISSUE 103

JB



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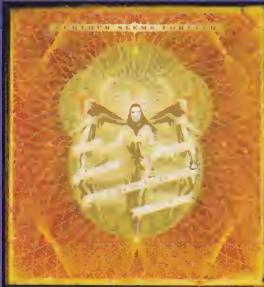
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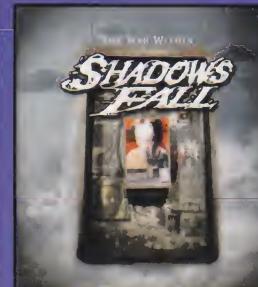
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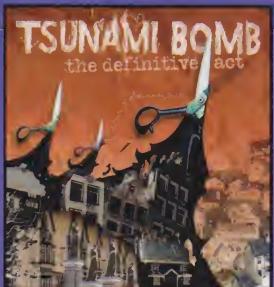
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WED SEP 15	THE NEW TRANSIT DIRECTION auditory aphasia Fairview VALLEY OF VISIONS Lorene Drive
THU SEP 16	T S O L Devils Junction THE DEEP EYND
FRI SEP 17	THE LURKERS MAD PARADE HOLLYTREE INFECTED THE MUDLARKS THE DISPUTES
SUN SEP 19	SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN QUALIFIER DAY BREAK * HYACINTH FUEL FOR HATRED THE LAST WAVE ROCKERS TO THE LAKE DYER * HATRIS CORRUPTIVE MORALS BEERUN * ALGORMORTIS SWITCH BLADE 77 SEA SIDE SUICIDE
MON SEP 20	PARK TOKYO ROSE My New Life RIVERSIDE DRIVE Amber Sky burnthestrack
FRI SEP 24	SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN FINAL ROUND * * * * death from the left nothing to lose pariah * ephesus organize noise jep rocket * skaven stuck in adolescence the giggloops
SAT SEP 25	RESENDO PRO-FE-CIA dissent eternal forsaken
SUN SEP 26	LOCAL HARDCORE NIGHT! Pillar of Fate the hate soul inside UNDERNEATH THE GUN a silent heartbeat
WED SEP 29	EARN YOUR KEEP MOTHER SPEED GHOSTORIES DROP IT PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS



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THU SEP 30	HARSH REALITY TOUR SYBRIED LYZANXIA FREAKHOUSE PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS
SUN OCT 3	SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN QUALIFIER LED BY DARNES LILUES AND REMAINS CASTOLE * FRINGE I'M NOT CLINT EASTWOOD CHAIN GANG OF SOULS PLUS MORE TBA

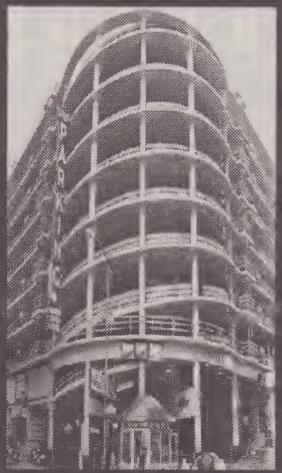
SAT OCT 2	UK SUBS THE GENERATORS Career Soldiers ALL OR NOTHING AC POGO ATTACK
SUN OCT 10	BEERZONE plus special guests
FRI OCT 15	EVERGREEN TERRACE UNTIL THE END CASEY JONES KNUCKLES THE WARRIORS

SAT OCT 16	the Vibrators CELL BLOCK 5 THE HITCHHIKERS THE VON STEINS
THU OCT 21	REFLUX ANIMOSITY GROWING THE FINAL BURDEN
FRI OCT 22	DR CHUD'S X-WARD PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

SAT OCT 30	skel o - ween the skeltones BUCK & HINE LA BANDA change up SKAISAVERA PIMPBOT
SAT NOV 6	100 DEMONS CAST ASIDE LAID TO REST KNUCKLES plus special guests

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THU-SEP 16	HARDCORE \$8 Martyr AD Haste The Day Dead to Fall Funeral Pyre	FRI-SEP 17	ROCKABILLY \$10 Three Bad Jacks Plus Special Guests	SAT-SEP 18	INDIE ROCK \$8 Transistor Radio • Say Anything The Process • Unfinished Business Wires on Fire • Plus Special Guest
THU-SEP 23	INDIE ROCK \$8 The Colour Repeat Repeat The Only Children Waking Ashland	FRI-SEP 24	HARDCORE \$10 Scars Of Tomorrow Gone Without Trace The Final Burden • A Dying Dream • With Passion	SUN-SEP 26	BENEFIT THRICE Check www.thrice.net For Ticket Info
WED-SEP 29	RECORD RELEASE \$8 Gratitude (Jonah From OneLinedrawing's New Band) Scary Kids Scaring Kids • Plus TBA	FRI-OCT 1	HARDCORE \$15 MADBALL / H2O North Side Kings • Plus Special Guests		
SAT-OCT 2	PUNK \$8 HOT CROSS HOLLYWOOD TEN BRONCO TATONKA Plus Special Guests	SUN-OCT 3	SKA SKA SKA \$12 The Toasters New Blood Revival • The Israelites	TUE-OCT 5	INDIE ROCK \$8 Great Glass Elevator Vela • Emanuel Arigma • Capulet
THU-OCT 7	POP PUNK \$10 National Product • Over It The Gamits • Outtareach	FRI-OCT 8	HARDCORE \$???? As Hope Dies • Black Heart Eulogy Cold War • Orangeburg Massacre		
MON-OCT 11	SOLD OUT Converge • Cave In Between The Buried and Me Bleeding Kansas (Tickets Still Available for Converge at the Glasshouse on 10/10)	FRI-OCT 15	EQUAL VISION TOUR \$8 Vaux Fear Before The March Of Flames Code Seven • Before Today		

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SUN	MON	TUES	WEDS	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Two Dollar Tuesday \$2.00 draft beer \$2.00 Well drinks 2 Tacos \$2.00	8	9	10	11
12	13 MON NITE FOOTBALL PARTY! Raffle Prizes	14 Two Dollar Tuesday \$2.00 draft beer \$2.00 Well drinks 2 Tacos \$2.00	15	16 ART GONE WRONG	17 ROCKABILLY SHOW Arsen Roulette Rory Justice C.C. Jerome Trio Normandie Blue	18 Music of the Jerry Garcia Band D.G.B.
19	20 MON NITE FOOTBALL PARTY! Raffle Prizes	21 Two Dollar Tuesday \$2.00 draft beer \$2.00 Well drinks 2 Tacos \$2.00	22	23 EXPENDABLES EL GEFE	24 D.J. THE ALMIGHTY NECTAR	25 PARKAIMON
26	27 MON NITE FOOTBALL PARTY! Raffle Prizes	28 Two Dollar Tuesday \$2.00 draft beer \$2.00 Well drinks 2 Tacos \$2.00	29	30 INDONESIAN MULES	10/1 Blues Queen: Zola Moon 10/2 Smiling Face Down 10/7 3 PartMix	10/9 The Have Not\$ 10/15 The George Fryer Combo 10/16 40RodPop 10/31 PARTY

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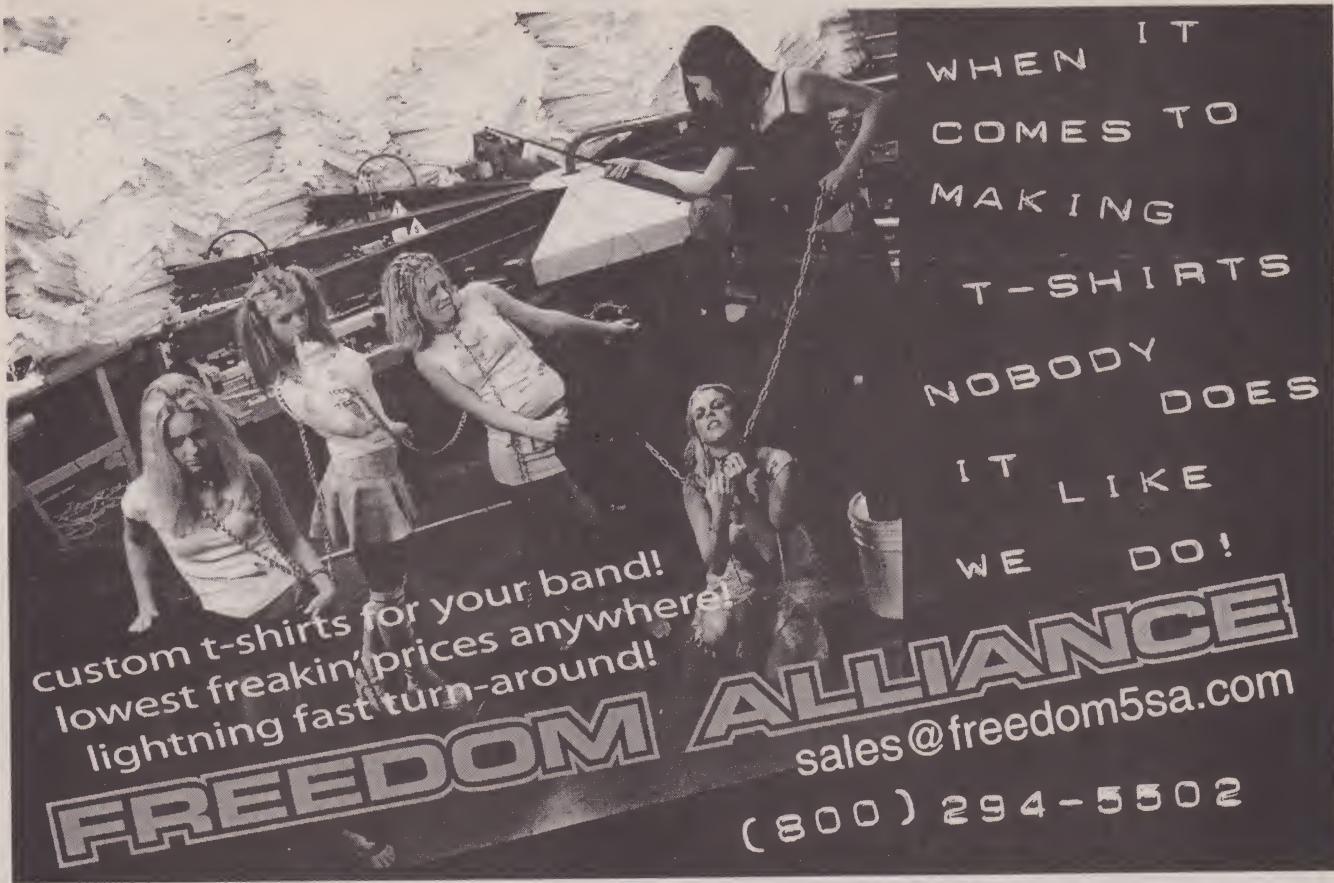
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BROKEN DRUMMING STICKS

Sparta's drummer, Tony Hajjar, broke his wrist while playing in Sparta's and Incubus's daily intramurals. Incubus's drummer and bass player helped fill in for Hajjar for the rest of their tour together.

MCS AT YOUR CCS AND US

Motion City Soundtrack (MCS) is looking to play a few colleges this fall. If you would like to hook this up at your school, contact roast@wma.com.

SOCIAL DISTORTION JOINS T. ARMY
Social D. will be touring in support of their new album w/ Tiger Army and The Explosion. Learn more at www.socialdistortion.com and www.epitaph.com.

THE NEW BAYSIDE

The New York pop/rock band, Bayside, has a new drummer, John, and new bassist, Nick, which spawned false rumors of their break-up. See www.baysiderocks.com for more info.

LISTED NUMBERS

Fall Out Boy gets a free phone from Samsung, and they have posted the number on the Internet. The number is (312) 351-0493 if you want to give them a ring. Read more at www.falloutboy-rock.com.

THE UNOFFICIAL RNC WELCOMING COMMITTEE

An estimated 400,000 people marched against the Bush administration and the Iraq war the day before the kick-off of the Republican National Convention (RNC) in the streets of New York.

SHAME ON SHADY ADVERTISERS

Punkhardcore.com is collecting donations right now because some of its advertisers have failed to pay them. They may have to shut down permanently without a successful fundraiser.

LOBSTER SAYS OUCH!

Steve Lubarsky, owner of Lobster Records, wrecked on his bike and broke his hip. Send your well-wishes to Steve@lobsterrecords.com. Check for updates at www.lobsterrecords.com.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

...And You Will Know Us By The Trail of Dead is hinting at reuniting with their recently separated bass player. Also in Trail of Dead news, their recently recorded album's release has been pushed back to January from October due to conflicting schedules with other Interscope artists. Keep on the Trail by visiting www.trailofdead.com.

VICTORY FOR XDOANEX

Victory Records has signed a deal to distribute the DVD label XDOANEX exclusively in North America. The first

video will feature Every Time I Die and A Static Lullaby. Find out more at www.victoryrecords.com.

SPITFIRE REIGNITES

Although Spitfire reportedly broke up in late 2001, they have reformed a couple of times to release material. They are currently in the studio recording.

CHANGE OVER FOR TAKEOVER

Takeover Records is changing their name to Old Guard Records reportedly due to some legal complications. The new site should be running soon at www.oldguardrecords.com.

OVER MY DEAD BAND

Over My Dead Body is said to be breaking up. The California hardcore band's final show will be in San Diego on November 27. Keep track of them at www.indecisionrecords.com.

NO MORE EARACHE 4 THE ANGEL

Metal band Morbid Angel departs from Earache Records after 15 years of working with them. This comes after Steve Tucker resigned from the band after eight years as their vocalist and bassist. Visit www.morbidangel.com

FATA MEMBER CHANGES

From Autumn to Ashes (FATA) bassist Mike Pilato has decided to leave the band. FATA also lost their guitarist this year. Their new guitarist is Jon Cox, and temporarily filling in on bass is Josh Newton. Learn more at www.fromautumntoashes.com.

MUSIC MARATHON MAYHEM

New York's CMJ Music Marathon happens October 13-16, and features thousands of music performers. Record labels participating include Jade Tree, Eyeball, Fat Wreck Chords, Drive Thru, Lookout!, Victory, and many, many more. Check it out at www.cmj.com.

ONCE LOVED, ALWAYS LOVED

The new band, The Loved Ones, has signed to Jade Tree Records. Formed out of pieces of Kid Dynamite, The Curse, and Trial By Fire. Learn more at www.jadtree.com.

EAT UP SUM NU JIMMY EAT WORLD

Jimmy Eat World is feeding their newest CD to their Jimmy-starved fans. FUTURES is set to release October 19, but you can get some previews at www.jimmyeatworld.com.

2004 OLYMPICS SUMMARY

The 2004 Athens Olympics are over. Paul Hamm won the individual all-around gold medal for men's gymnastics and was asked to return the medal due to scoring errors. This year's sand volleyball created a stir with its party atmosphere, including dancing cheer-

leaders in bikinis. The Iraqi soccer team's surprise success took them within sight of a medal. Finally, Adrian Annus of Hungary was ordered to return his gold medal in the men's hammer throw after neglecting to drug test.

SHADOWS FALL GOING OFF

Kung Fu Records has released their newest DVD in their live DVD series, THE SHOW MUST GO OFF! This one features Shadows Fall at House of Blues in Anaheim, California. For more info, visit www.kungfurecords.com

ONE MAN ARMY AT EASE

BYO Records band, One Man Army, has sent out their official break-up notice. The band's members are dabbling in other bands now, including vocalist/guitarist Jack Dalrymple joining Swingin' Utters on guitar. Read about it at www.byorecords.com.

BLED FOR LIFE

Just when we thought Bled member Josh Sorbello had left the band to move to Texas, he is back and shredding bass lines with them once again. How could we ever have doubted that when their Website is www.bled4life.com?

STRUNG OUT ON X

Strung Out just finished recording their next release, EXILE IN OBLIVION, and they left time to play in the X-Games for you boys and girls. Strung Out says EXILE IN OBLIVION is their heaviest CD to date. Visit www.strung-out.com.

BEER, BEER, BEER

The celebration beer-drinkers long for year round is finally back! Octoberfest is traditionally celebrated in the first weeks of October (and sometimes late September), so keep your beer goggles focused on what bands are playing your town's celebration of this glorious day.

MATCHBOOK PLUS MOTION

Matchbook Romance and Motion City Soundtrack have come out with an acoustic split album. For a little taste of the artwork and details, visit www.epitaph.com.

FROM FATA TO ONE TRUE THING

Melanie Willis, the girl who guest vocals for From Autumn To Ashes has her very own band, One True Thing. They released FINALLY on Play the Assassin Records last December. Find out more at www.playtheassassin.com.

HOPE IS NOT DEAD

Hope did not die for the metal/hardcore band, As Hope Dies, because after breaking up for one year, they are back together recording new material again (although it is rumored not with all original members). Check it out at www.undeclaredrecords.com.

FLOGGING MOLLY AGAIN

Flogging Molly has released their newest CD, WITHIN A MILE OF HOME on Side One Dummy. Go to www.sideonemummy.com/floggingmolly. Catch them on tour with The Briggs!

REVIVED SITE BRINGS LIVE AUDIO
Punkinterviews.com has re-launched their site with over 100 live audio interviews for you music enthusiasts to get your hands on. Check them out at www.punkinterviews.com.

BANDS SET FOR NEXT WARPED

August 20 marked the end of this year's Warped Tour, and already Avenged Sevenfold, The Transplants, and My Chemical Romance are confirmed for next year's roster. Warped2005.com will be up and running by January, but until then, check for updates on [warped2004.com](http://www.warped2004.com).

ADDING A LIL PUNK TO LATE NIGHT
NOFX performed on LATE NIGHT WITH CONAN O'BRIEN on August 10. This gave NOFX the perfect chance to promote their anti-Bush agenda and create a little punk rock chaos on late night TV. Visit www.nofxofficialwebsite.com for more on the band.

MEET AFI THIS HOLIDAY

Nitro Records will be releasing a retrospective CD of AFI. The CD will feature songs from each of the six albums AFI released with Nitro. Nitro hails this to be the perfect little Christmas present for you kiddies who only know the over-10-year-old band through their latest album, SING THE SORROW. See www.nitrorecords.com for details.

FULLY AUTOMATIC GRIEVES

Fully Automatic Records lost their core staffer, Rob Robbins, when he passed away August 28. I think we speak for a lot of the music community when we say that Rob will truly be missed. See [fullyautomatic.org](http://www.fullyautomatic.org) for contacts and info.

FAT WRECKS ONLY CRIME

Only Crime's debut CD, TO THE NINES, has been released on Fat Wreck Chords as the label's newest band. Only Crime is made up of ex-members of such bands as Good Riddance, Bane, and Descendents. More at www.fatwreck.com.

DRUM ROLL PLEASE

DRUM! MAGAZINE has released their annual readers poll, and the top four punk rock drummers have been named: Blink 182's Travis Barker, Perfect Circle's Josh Freese (also played with The Vandals and Suicidal Tendencies, among others), Strung Out's Jordan Burns, and Green Day's Tre Cool. Read more at www.drummagazine.com.

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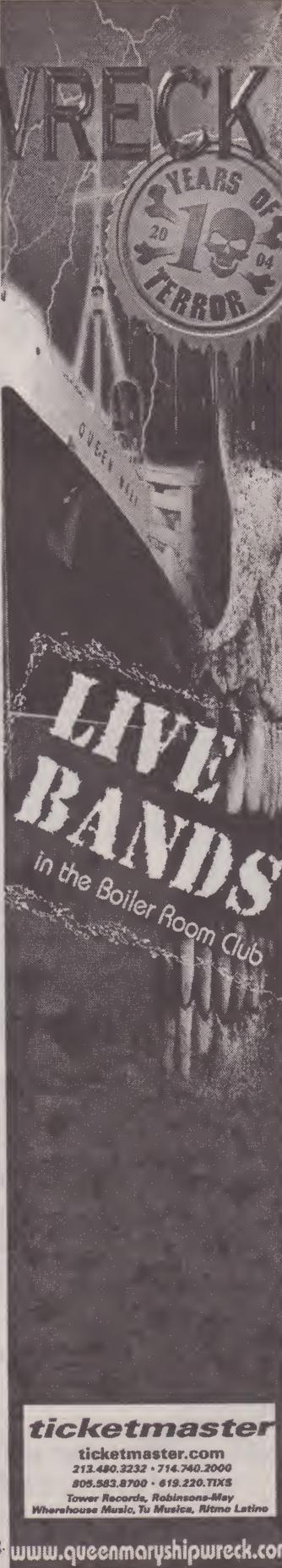
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Los Abandoned

Xanimo

Bronson

Reven

SEPTEMBER 20

Madcap

(VICTORY)

Stairwell

(HOPELESS)

The Psychotics

Minus Me

SEPTEMBER 27

1208

(EPITAPH)

Neviah

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The Knife Fight

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(FEARLESS)

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We would like to thank: Acceptance, The Chemistry, The Higher, The Snake The Cross The Crown, Gatsby's American Dream, Kill Radio, Jenoah, Waking Ashland, The Mean Reds, Amity, Lances Hero, Madcap, Anadavine, Blue Print Car Crash, and Audio Karate for an amazing summer!!

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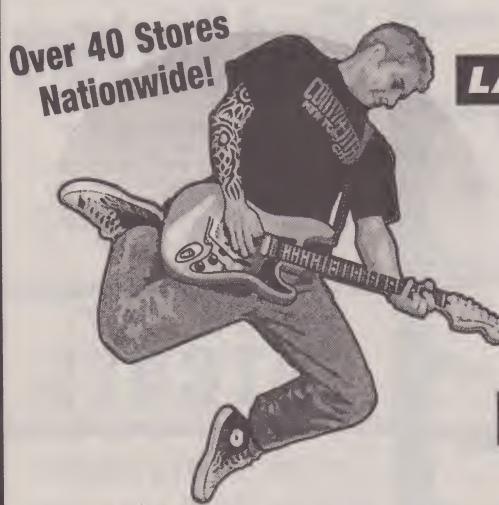
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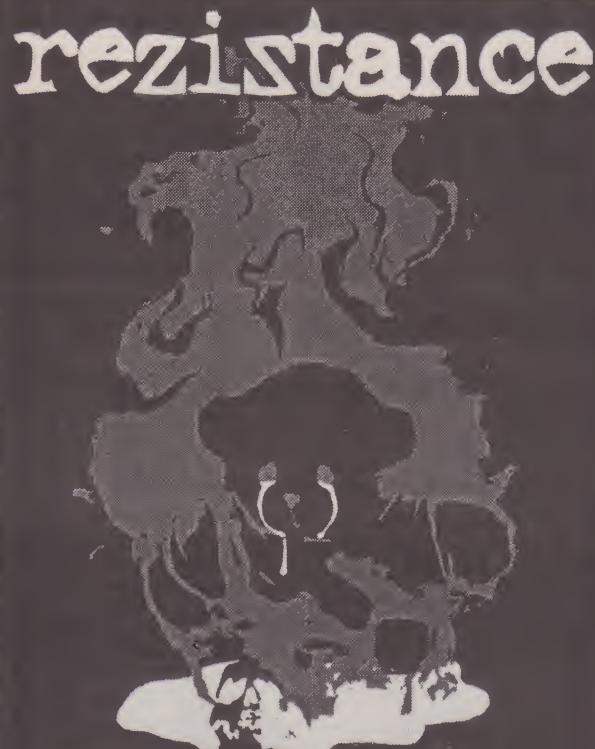
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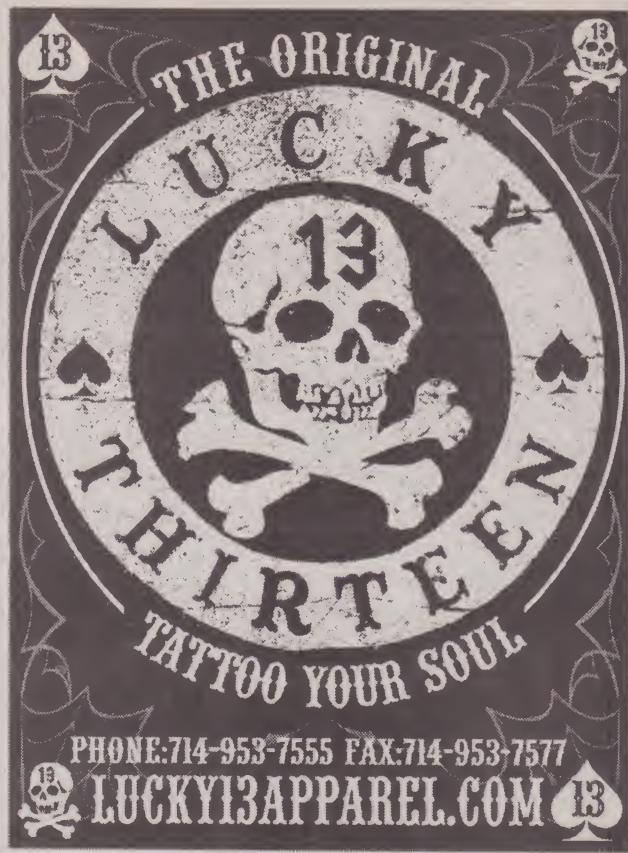
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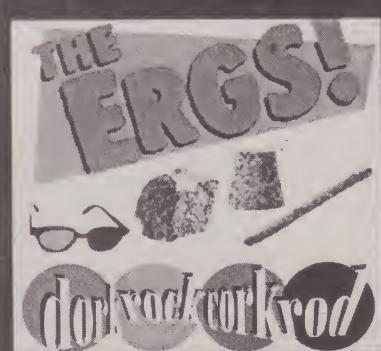
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in order of appearance:

**Converge
The Faint
Further Seems Forever
Taking Back Sunday
Cattle Decapitation
Planes Mistaken For Stars
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Underoath
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Converge
By Dave Kargol
Photo by Andrea
Rigano

Converge doesn't really need an introduction. Most anyone who is even slightly familiar with the world of aggressive music is familiar with their name and bleak and neck-breaking heavy sound. It's doubtful that the "you either love it or hate it" tag better applies to another band, and most who have encountered Converge's ever-evolving but always furious technical din are as fixed to their verdict as they are to their position on abortion.

Although Converge's cult-like following (their official Website is actually) and many critics insist they are one of the most influential extant bands in hardcore, most of the band's abrasive constructions are far beyond the reach of the average mosh-metal outfit. Simply put, not many people can pull this shit off. This is especially true concerning 2001's cathartic masterpiece JANE DOE, where the violence of "Concupine" and "Heaven in Her Arms" explodes with frantic energy, propelling the darkest and most personal aspects of vocalist Jacob Bannon's life to the forefront by the shovelful. Converge is certainly unique in its ability to bring Bannon's emotional wreckage to life with such vivid sincerity and conviction. Bannon wears his battered heart and soul on his sleeve throughout Converge's catalogue, often projecting his poetry through his notorious shredding and panther-like growl. He's not a vocalist who writes lyrics because the standard conception of a rock band requires him to; he does so because he has a burning message to communicate. There's a distinct difference between whining about your girlfriend's haircut and the profound veracity of a line like "I'll take my love to the grave" ("The Broken Vow"). That same unbridled intensity and flawless execution is channeled into YOU FAIL ME, Converge's fourth true full-length (which is their first release for the legendary Epitaph imprint, following their split from Equal

Vision earlier this year). And while YOU FAIL ME isn't a total departure from the roaring whirlwind of JANE DOE (fast and fiery tracks such as "Black Cloud" and "Eagles Become Vultures" seem like B-sides from that album), YOU FAIL ME sees Converge trying new and impressive things, such as the record's lone and hauntingly quiet guitar intro, "First Light", and the subdued acoustic strumming of "In Her Shadow".

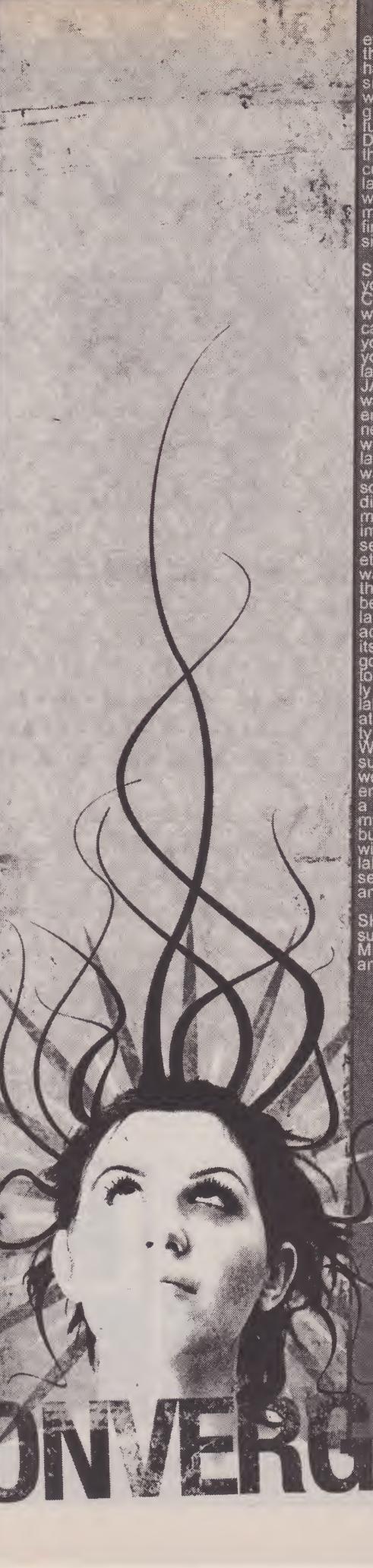
SKRATCH recently sent a list of questions to the always busy Bannon (who is also an in-demand graphic designer and cornerstone of the Deathwish Inc. label) via e-mail.

SKRATCH: How has life been treating you recently?

JACOB: I've been doing alright. I keep myself fairly busy by habit with creative projects, as well as helping run the Deathwish label.

SKRATCH: I know you made the move from Equal Vision to Epitaph not long ago. What prompted this decision? Why not Deathwish?

JACOB: After JANE DOE was released, our obligations to Equal Vision, in our opinion, entered a grey area. We felt that our contractual obligations were fulfilled at that point. After some talking amongst ourselves, we came to the collective conclusion that we were no longer comfortable with Equal Vision and that a new label home was needed. After months of talking amongst ourselves, we decided that there were only a few labels that we would feel comfortable with being a part of. Epitaph was actually our first choice [...] We met some people over at Epitaph who were very supportive of our



efforts, and that was the end. I didn't feel any better there was no clarity in it for me. At that point, I continued to write and continued to do a great deal of soul searching. In that I found so much failure in myself, friends, and loved ones. These are our songs of failure how we fail each other and how we fail ourselves. It's about standing up and taking responsibility. It's about facing that demon. It's about putting the practice of living in front of the act of dying every day. It's about surviving.

SKRATCH: I imagine you're quite busy with Converge, as well as with your design career. What made you decide to start your own record label?

JACOB: The label was founded out of emotional and ethical necessity. At the time when we started the label, there no longer was an ethically sound label releasing diverse aggressive music. Labels either immersed themselves in the DIY ethic and had no forward movement or they simply left it behind when major-label influence and accessibility reared its ugly head. Our goal was (and still is) to exist as an ethically sound independent label, yet still to create the highest quality releases possible. We are growing and succeeding. When we started the label, emotionally I needed a place to immerse myself, to lose myself but be productive with my efforts. The label gave me that sense of fulfillment and still does today.

SKRATCH: Try to summarize YOU FAIL ME both musically and thematically. How does this record relate to JANE DOE?

JACOB: When we

released JANE DOE, I felt that I would have a

SKRATCH: Your songs are deeply personal and many times (to point out the obvious) angry. Would you describe yourself as an angry person?

JACOB: Music and art is my outlet. With that you see a depth and an anger. I don't see myself as an angry person.

SKRATCH: Do you have an opinion regarding violence at shows, such as moshing, etc.? Do you think hardcore bands such as Hatebreed encourage violence?

JACOB: If our friends in Hatebreed encourage violence, then we do as well. I feel both of us draw from a similar well of emotion. However, I disagree with your assumption that any of us encourage violence. If anything, we both encourage triumph in the face of adversity, as well as respect for those who warrant it.

SKRATCH: What is the status of the band's plan to re-record and re-release PETITIONING THE EMPTY SKY and WHEN FOREVER COMES CRASHING?

JACOB: Just remixing, remastering, and repackaging. We are in the process of completing that project.

SKRATCH: What technique do you use for your screaming voice? Have your vocal chords ever been damaged?

JACOB: There's no technique, really. You learn your limits, and you coexist with them.

SKRATCH: What

sense of closure. After all, the album was a massive purging for me. In

instruments can you play? What role do you typically play in shaping Converge's music?

JACOB: I can play guitar, bass, and drums pretty well. At this point in the band, we all bring something to the table musically.

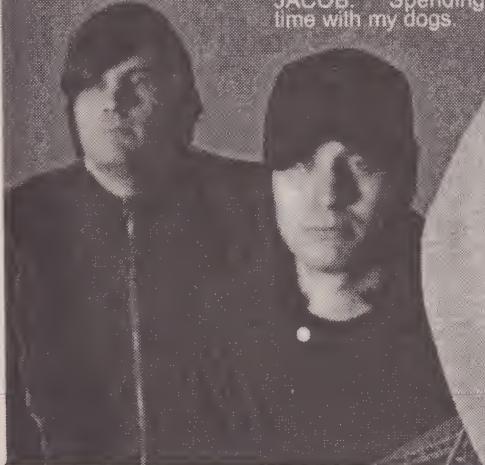
SKRATCH: Your video for "Concubine/Fault and Fracture" is stunning. Are you planning on filming any new videos for the new record?

JACOB: We have plans for video for this album. We will be shooting.

SKRATCH: What do you enjoy doing most when you're not working on art or music?

JACOB: Spending time with my dogs.

MUSIC AND ART S MY OUTLET. WITH THAT YOU SEE A DEPTH AND AN ANGER. I DON'T SEE MYSELF AS AN ANGRY PERSON



SKRATCH: How long have you been actively creating visual art and doing design work?

JACOB: I've been creating visual art since I was a kid. I've been doing design work since 1995.

SKRATCH: How often do you write (i.e., the written word)?

JACOB: Every day.

SKRATCH: What was your first tattoo? At what age did you get it?

JACOB: My first tattoo has since been covered. I first was tattooed when I was 15 years old.

SKRATCH: Do you have a steady artist who works on you?

JACOB: There have been a variety of people who have worked on me: Mike Lussier, Don Lussier, Grez, Jeff Whitehead, King Ron, Adam Barton, Darren Brass, Thomas Hooper, and more.

SKRATCH: What are you planning on having done next?

JACOB: There are many ongoing projects.

SKRATCH: What do you feel makes life worth living?

JACOB: Love. Friendship. Family.

SKRATCH: What's next for Converge, and how much of the Converge story remains to be written?

JACOB: We'll continue as long as we feel we have something relevant to create and to express. Thank you for your time.

Converge will be knocking over clubs nationwide this fall when they hit the long road to support YOU FAIL ME with Cave In and Between the Buried and Me. For a comprehensive list of dates, visit www.convergecult.com.

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THE FAINT
BY TIFFANY CHOW

Finally, every scene kid's favorite band to dance to has released a new album. Electro-darlings The Faint (on Omaha's well-known indie label Saddle Creek) have done it again. *WET FROM BIRTH*, being released on September 14, will be their fourth full-length (not including the REMIXES version of *DANSE MACABRE*). Like their others, it will not only blow away the industry and their fans, it will defy every boundary of categorizing and labeling. The Faint is not electro-clash. The Faint is not indie rock. The Faint is pure awesomeness (is that a word?)—and no one really cares what genre they belong in.

So, how does a band that defies all the labels write their music? What do they do for fun? Who are they and where do they come from? I tried to find out by asking bassist Joel Petersen a few questions via e-mail.

SKRATCH: First, introduce yourself and let us know what you do in The Faint.

JOEL PETERSEN: I play bass and talk on the phone.

SKRATCH: Finally! The Faint is releasing an entirely new album, *WET FROM BIRTH*, on September 14, 2004. Tell us what you personally feel is different on *WET FROM BIRTH* from your previous work and what kind of effect it will have on the music industry.

SKRATCH: How did The Faint's sound come about? JP: Yeah, "finally" is truly the right word. Well, I think we had a

lot of different writing the **SKRATCH:** Saddle Creek has become a hugely recognized and new record. First, we Creek? d i d n ' t want to write

JP: Good. It is our home.

SKRATCH: Do you think either The Faint or Saddle Creek would be where it was today without the other?

JP: I feel very lucky that we get to make music for our friends to put out, and I hope they feel lucky to put out their friends' music.

SKRATCH: What are the plans for the coming months? Any mainstream press or tours?

JP: We have been doing interviews and what not, and we have lots of touring plans for this fall/winter—and even a bit in the spring.

SKRATCH: You were experiencing a lot of radio play on major radio stations. How did this feel?

JP: [...] It wasn't something we had ever hoped for or really cared about, but I suppose it was nice to see them playing something that didn't follow the usual chain of payola.

SKRATCH: On previous tours, you brought along huge screens and played amazing visuals while you performed. Tell us a little bit about that project. Why and how did it come about? Are there similar plans in the works for the next tour?

JP: Yeah, we like to do video stuff for our shows. Jacob and Dapose do most of the video stuff, with us looking over their shoulders. We are all interested in visual

DANSE MACABRE part art, and I think it was two, but we did want to learn from it and improve upon things that we didn't like. We tried to be more open in our ideas for songs and for lyrical content. We liked the idea of doing different types of songs. I have no idea what kind of effect it will have on the music scene, if any. I guess time will tell. Hopefully, people will have a good time with it.

SKRATCH: Fill us in a little bit on what the writing and recording process is like, especially for this new album.

JP: After quite a bit of touring, we decided to not play any shows for a year in order to write songs. We also booked the studio time then in order

to give ourselves a set deadline. We tend to write songs very slowly because of our lack of any consistent method. A song idea can come from any of us at any time. Same with [the] parts to a song: none of us have specific

roles in the writing process. I, personally,

like the fact that any of us can pick an instrument and work our idea for a part in a song, that none of us feels ownership over any certain instrument. We were in the studio for a little less than two months. It was a long session, but [it was] worth it in the end. We are happy with the new record.

SKRATCH: How did The Faint's sound come about?

Was it something intentionally sought after, or did it evolve into what it is today? or did it happen completely by chance?

JP: I think it was an evolution. It took us time to figure out what we liked and disliked about what we did. We are still in that process—and hopefully we always will be.

SKRATCH: Saddle Creek has become a hugely recognized and respected indie label. How does The Faint feel about Saddle Creek?

JP: Good. It is our home.

SKRATCH: Do you think either The Faint or Saddle Creek would be where it was today without the other?

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JP: Yeah, we like to do video stuff for our shows. Jacob and Dapose do most of the video stuff, with us looking over their shoulders. We are all interested in visual

JP: "Symptom Finger". Not sure why. I include that in our music. We will be doing more video stuff on our next tour. If I were you, I'd be itching to get my fingers on the new album. Lucky for me, I already have it...and it's

SKRATCH: The Faint definitely stands out from other bands. You've been called "genre-defying." Do you agree with that label? What do you feel sets The Faint apart?

JP: I think that is a nice idea. Hopefully it is true. I think most bands and artists would like to be considered solely by their art and not in association with other's art—but this is not a perfect world.

SKRATCH: What does a "genre-defying" band like The Faint do in their spare time?

JP: Make videos and music in non-Faint bands.

SKRATCH: I want to talk about the *DANSE MACABRE REMIXES* album for a second. Whose idea was it?

JP: We have been interested in remixes for a while, and it was something we wanted to do. I like the idea of hearing what someone else has in mind for what our band should sound like.

SKRATCH: The *REMIXES* album was received overwhelmingly well. Did this surprise the band? Did you hope for this kind of success?

JP: Was it? I guess I am surprised. This is the first I have heard of it being received overwhelmingly well. We never hope for that kind of success; we just try and make the best music we can.

SKRATCH: Are there any plans to do another album of remixes?

JP: Not currently.

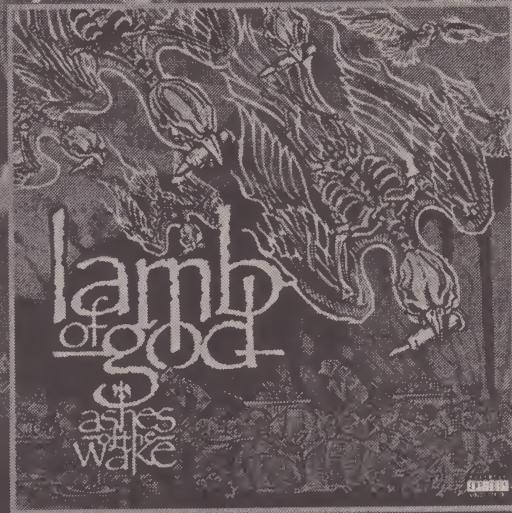
SKRATCH: If you had to choose one song from the new album to never play at a show, ever, which would it be?



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Further Seems Forever

By Mabel Lam

Third time's a charm. Even though this is a worn out cliché, it's still applicable to Further Seems Forever—and without doubt it's fitting for their newest album, *HIDE NOTHING*. By combining the more sentimental aspect of *THE MOON IS DOWN* and the rawer edge of *HOW TO START A FIRE*, all five members ended up creating a perfect balance between the two. Starting from their home base in Florida, these five guys will tour the nation to launch *HIDE NOTHING*.

SKRATCH: So how are you guys keeping yourself occupied before *HIDE NOTHING* is released and you guys go on your three-month tour?

DERICK: We've been pretty busy. We played a big festival called Cornerstone on July 3rd and kind of a random show in Idaho on July 6th, I believe. Actually, I literally just got back home from Orlando. We just recorded three acoustic songs that are going to be on a special promotional type of CD through Best Buy. After this, we're going to be rehearsing. We have a couple more shows (one here in Fort Lauderdale, one in Colorado with P.O.D., Blindsight, and other bands like that ([which] should be a lot of fun) in early August). Then we'll be rehearsing right up until our tour starts—which I believe is August the 20th. We'll be doing a full U.S. tour August, September, and early October.

SKRATCH: What about when you guys are at home? How do you kill time then?

DERICK: Usually, we're on tour a lot, [then] at home a few weeks at a time, so we spend it with family and friends. We write when we can and rehearse...but really, we're on tour a lot. We had a little hiatus—obviously, with the new singer—so during that time we were working and stuff like that,

getting the album finished with Jon, [and] just kind of gearing up for the tour.

SKRATCH: Do you guys ever wind up killing each other when you're on the road?

DERICK: Nah, not too much. There's definitely times when you're thinking that you're tired of being in the van amongst these guys. We're pretty used to it now, since we've been touring together for about four years. Obviously, everyone's had their moment on the road, whether it's being tired or being sick of being there. But usually it makes up for it when we play a good show and have fun. We feel good, even though we've seen the country a million times now. It's still cool to see new places and meet neat people and hang out.

SKRATCH: Have you ever read *ON THE ROAD*?

DERICK: [Laughs] Actually, I have. But, yeah, our life isn't really like that.

SKRATCH: Maybe it's just me, but I didn't notice that CD releases always happen on Tuesday until my friend pointed out that. Why is this?

DERICK: I really have NO idea! They do about 99.9% of the time have them released on Tuesday. DVDs, too, actually. I really don't know why that is the case. I assume it has something to do with the shipping or marketing.

SKRATCH: Your first album, *THE MOON IS DOWN*, in some respects was soft, while the second, *HOW TO START A FIRE*, leaned toward a more aggressive side. Which direction do you think you guys have turned towards with this album?

DERICK: I think it's somewhere in between, actually. There's one acoustic and mellow song on the album, but most of the music is pretty aggressive. It has a lot of the nice vocal qualities

of the great melodies and great lyrics, and a lot of the same fire that *HOW TO START A FIRE*. The instrumentation and the music itself are excellent, as well. It's a perfect balance—basically, what we've always wanted and have been working towards.

SKRATCH: So is this more of Jon's contribution or more from the fact that the band collectively achieved what it wanted after so long?

DERICK: I think it's both. When Jon joined up, we had pretty much decided to break up when our last singer quit. We heard that his band, Sense Field, had just broken up, and we were like, "Well, let's give Jon a call." He's an amazing singer, and you never know what can happen. So he came in, and we gave him a couple songs. The music had already been recorded, and he did two songs for it, and we were like blown away. He definitely had a HUGE impact on how happy we are with the melodies, the lyrics, and the music. When I was writing for *HOW TO START A FIRE*, I was still fairly new to it. We were still kinda started touring heavily together and were kinda learning the ropes and strengths and weaknesses about each other; whereas this album was a real joy to write.

SKRATCH: Do you personally have a preference of the softer or harder sound?

DERICK: Uh, I don't know. It depends on the direction [...] There's no set sound in the beginning. The songs would start out, and it went in the direction it went. I don't really have a preference, though. I like the heavier tunes we play...and sometimes the mellow ones.

SKRATCH: What message are you guys trying to convey with the title, "HIDE NOTHING"?

DERICK: It's one of the names of the songs. I don't know. With all the drama with our last singer leaving and all the

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It's a perfect balance—basically, what we've always wanted and have been working towards.



things that we later discovered had been going on, we just felt like it was a very [fitting] name for the album, because we're not trying to be shady and not trying to hide anything, where-as we felt like a lot of stuff was kept from us.

SKRATCH: Are there any odd habits (when touring or rehearsing) from you guys

DERICK: Lyrically, I think you need to speak more to Jon. But I think it's a really positive CD and that it's basically about our experiences. We really went through a very hard period when our last singer left, when all these things were coming to light. When Jon came in, there was really a breath of fresh air, and I think the songs really capture that.

SKRATCH: Six years is a long time! Are you guys like those sickeningly sweet couples who celebrate every year that goes by?

DERICK: I think we tour so much that the time just passes without our really paying too much attention. It's just a progression, and you have to make many sacrifices. You can't see your family much, who were vegan and vegetarian.

you're sleeping in a hotel every

an. They were just, like, "Come

night or riding in a van on, try it out. You might like it." overnight.... It's just part of what we do every day. We don't celebrate every year that passes, [but] we look forward to every new album we get to write.

SKRATCH: Are there any odd

habits (when touring or rehearsing) from you guys that Jon [the new singer] had to get used to?

DERICK: Our drummer usually snores really loud, so we stick him in with the crew. Other than dealing with little things like that, not really. We don't have any strange rituals or anything before we play.

SKRATCH: Anyway, back to you. I plugged "Derick

Cordoba" in a search engine, and I saw that you're a vegetarian on PETA's site. Do

you have any pets of your

own that you took into con-

sideration when you decided

to go vegan?

DERICK: I DO have a cat, but that's not why I went vegan. A little over four years ago, I took a road trip across the country, and you have to make many sacrifices. You and I went with a couple friends

who were vegan and vegetari-

an. They were just, like, "Come

night or riding in a van on, try it out. You might like it." And I was like, Whatever, I'll be vegetarian for a month. After that, I realized that I could definitely do it—especially after learning all the negative aspects of factory farming and environmental impacts. I just figured that it was a smarter way to live.

SKRATCH: Have you ever influenced any of the other band members?

DERICK: Ah, no, not really. Chad basically tip-toes around being vegetarian. He goes back and forth a little bit; but Jon and our drummer are pretty militant meat-eaters. I...think they enjoy eating the meat around me. Heh, it's pretty funny. We all have our own different ways in doing things. There are no hard feelings either way.

SKRATCH: Do you treat your guitar like it's your own pet?

DERICK: I tend to go through phases where I use one more than the other. I've been playing my Goldtop for awhile now. That's kinda been my baby; but I switch back and forth. I don't name my guitars or sleep next to them in my bed or anything.

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TAKING BACK SUNDAY



TAKING BACK SUNDAY

Interview by Beth VanBoxtel

Taking Back Sunday is on the road to having a successful year in terms of record sales with their latest effort *WHERE YOU WANT TO BE* (Victory Records). Forming in November of 1999 and releasing their first full-length on Victory in 2002, TBS has experienced a few bumps along the way, including a change in lineup, but this indie group has learned to put drama behind them and their best foot forward. Boundless in their efforts to be seen and heard, TBS has appeared on national television, played an opening slot at the Donnington Download Festival on their first trip to Europe, and chatted with Dr. Drew and Adam Corolla on *LOVELINE*.

In the midst of their busy schedule, vocalist Adam Lazzara answered a few questions via e-mail from 3,000 miles away before a show in the U.K.

SKRATCH: "A Decade Under the Influence" (off of your latest album, *WHERE YOU WANT TO BE*) has been chosen as your first single. What is the most memorable or best thing that has happened to you in the past 10 years?

ADAM: That's a funny question, because I honestly feel that everything that is going on in my life right now-both personally and with the band-makes every day something to look forward to-because every day pretty much tops the one before.

SKRATCH: What went into the making of the music video for this single? Can you tell us a little about the premise? Who produced the video?

ADAM: The video was directed by Adam Levitt and his company Associates in Science. We rented out this old warehouse room with no windows and built three separate

tracks that had these remote-control cars in them. The cars had cameras on top, and they circled us as we played.

SKRATCH: As you were recording *WHERE YOU WANT TO BE*, were there any specific goals you wanted to achieve? How important is it to you to take a lot of time to record an album? Was there anything that you were listening to during the writing or recording time that influenced anything on the album?

ADAM: The only goal we had going into the new record was to come out with something that we were proud of. Taking time to record is real important. There is so much that goes into it that things would get easily missed or skipped over if we rushed through. While we were recording the record, I was listening to a lot of Al Green and Run DMC, so I think that shines through the most.

SKRATCH: Who gives the songs their names?

ADAM: We all choose the song titles; it's a group vote. Normally, they are named after something one of us said or something one of our friends has said in passing that, or we take them from late night TV.

SKRATCH: "I Am Fred Astaire" is one of your song titles. Astaire is known for his incredible dancing and charismatic personality. What do you want to be remembered for?

ADAM: Being a stand-up, good guy.

SKRATCH: You played the Warped Tour Kickoff Party with the bands A Thorn for Every Heart and Jackson. What went well during this show? Was it surprising, inspiring, or

uplifting that the audience was so receptive to the newer songs?

ADAM: It was one of the best shows that we have played, if not the best. It's definitely in the top five.

SKRATCH: Since you are one of the headlining acts for this summer's Vans Warped Tour, do you have any surprises in store that you can give us any hints about?

ADAM: Think Astroturf.

SKRATCH: Taking Back Sunday has been featured on a few covers of magazines. Do you tell your mom

when you're featured in magazines or on TV? How supportive are your parents of your music ambitions/career? What is the best thing that your parents make for dinner?

ADAM: Definitely. Normally, I tell them that we did the shoot, and then they go out and get it before I ever get the chance to see it. I have been blessed with the greatest father in the world. He is supportive of every aspect of my life. He makes anything on the grill

kick ass. I honestly feel that everything that is going on in my life right now—both personally and with the band—makes every day something to look forward to—because every day pretty much tops the one before.

Visit the newly designed site for TBS at www.takingbacksunday.com, and check them out at this year's Vans Warped Tour.

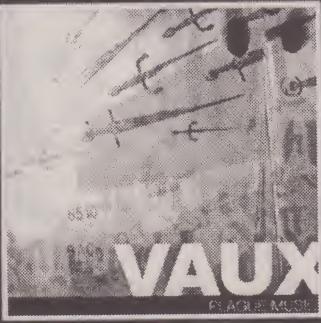


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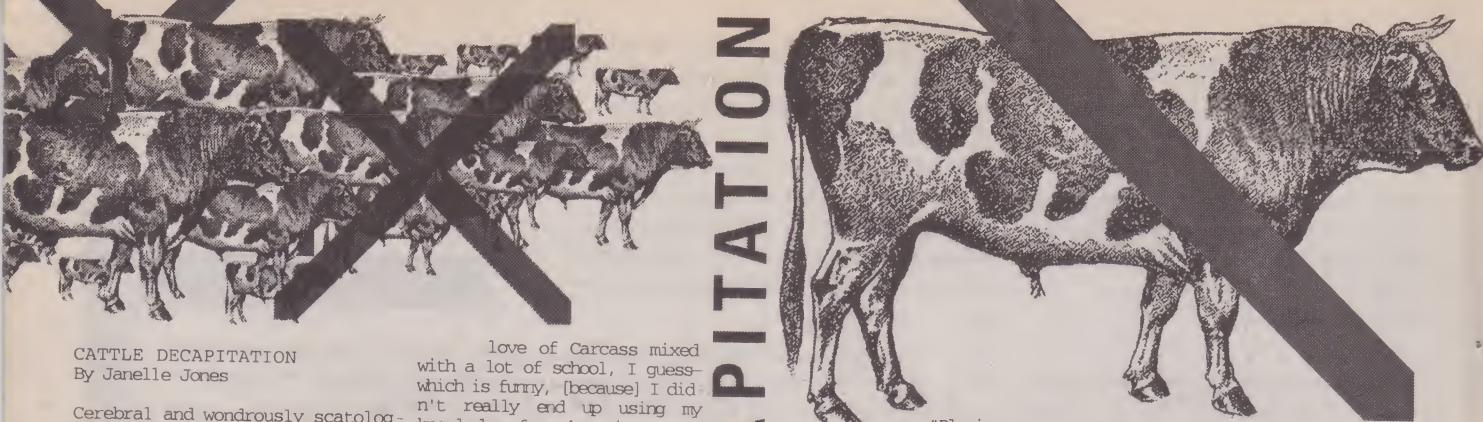
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CATTLE DECAPITATION

By Janelle Jones

Cerebral and wondrously scatological, gore-grind/death-metal behemoths Cattle Decapitation are back with their fourth full-length (and second for Metal Blade), ingeniously-titled HUMANURE.

To gain some insight into this four-piece and learn about the gory goodness that is HUMANURE, read on.

SKRATCH: Your knowledge and use of anatomical terms is crazy! But the gory detail you get into (I'm thinking of that song "Polyps").... How do you know so much?

TRAVIS: [...] I took a lot of physiology in high school and then went to college for medical assisting, but that kinda failed. But what I did was, I took a ton of [medical] terminology courses, so that mixed with really being into Carcass all my life. They used a lot of that stuff, so that's what initially got me into it. But then I wanted to learn about what they were talking about and shit like that. So, it comes from a

love of Carcass mixed with a lot of school, I guess—which is funny, [because] I didn't really end up using my knowledge for what it's supposed to be applied to. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: But what's with the uh, fecal fascination?

TRAVIS: It's not so much that as it's like a...Overall, it's kind of a metaphor, like the whole "humanity is shit" thing. It's the next logical step after our last album, TO SERVE MAN: after you serve food and eat it, it gets digested, and then you shit it out. That's kinda what this whole album's about. [Laughs] Sort of. It's not like that band Waco Jesus, [who] talk about shitting and stuff like that; that's not what I'm talking about. You just gotta read the lyrics, look at the artwork, listen to the album, and get the whole overall vibe—then you'll see the difference.

SKRATCH: Right. One line I found to be really profound is:

CATTLE DECAPITATION

"Playing king of the hill on a mountain of manure." It's a real stab at humanity, kinda how man thinks he's so important—and, newsflash! we're really not. [Laughs]

TRAVIS: Yeah, and, like, the buck stops here. We're the be all, end all. It's bullshit, you know? We're a blemish on the face of the Earth, if anything.

SKRATCH: Exactly. We're not even needed. We ruined everything.

TRAVIS: Yeah! That's pretty much the overall subject matter of our lyrics—especially the new album.

SKRATCH: I can totally get into that. [Laughs] But like I was saying, all the detail you get into, it's gory, but not cartoonish.

TRAVIS: Yeah, enough other bands are doing that shit. I try to

bring a little bit more into it.

SKRATCH: How does this record differ from past releases?

TRAVIS: It's more similar to our last one, TO SERVE MAN, than to the first couple. Lyrically and theme wise, it's just more an extension [of TSM], but musically it's far superior and WAY different from our first two, [which] were kinda real grindy, like, real short, fast songs. The new stuff's a lot more melodic. [The production on HUMANURE is] way better [than on TSM], and we got a different drummer, and he brought a lot more to it,

which makes it a lot different and makes it stand out a lot more than the last one. But songwriting wise, it's kinda similar—it's just such a better record, very listenable for a gore-y metal band. [...] I think a lot of different people can get into it. There's a lot of black-metal

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influences in there, and there's a lot of (dare I say) power metal or whatever, a lot of melodic stuff going on. But it all comes back to the real punishing and fast and intense, frantic feeling we've always had.

SKRATCH: You mention the new drummer. You've had some line-up changes. Do you feel it's pretty stable now?

TRAVIS: Yeah, totally. [...] Now we have four tour-ready workhorses. I'm glad we're finally at the point where we have a bunch of people who really wanna tour, 'cause all the label wants you to do is sell your record-and [touring] is the only way to really do it. Also, it's the best way to go out and see the country and the world. We're stoked, especially that we have a lot to prove with this album, 'cause the last one sold really well; but I think it got bashed a lot in reviews, especially because of the production. [There's] a little bit of monotony going on there, but there's nothing like that on this record. [...] We're really amped to get out there to tour and promote this one [...].

SKRATCH: What's with Germany banning the record? It's because of the artwork?

TRAVIS: Yeah, they say it's banned. When something's banned, it's because the cops took note of it and came in and seized fuckin' albums and stuff like that. That didn't happen. What [happened was that] the distributor who handles every

of metal releases is SPV, and online and people they basically don't handle anything like that anymore because of Cannibal Corpse's...it was either BUTCHERED AT BIRTH or TOMB OF THE MUTILATED. [Anyway,] I think some kid killed himself or killed somebody or did something, and he had those records, so they blamed the record, of course. Ever since then, you can't wear a Cannibal Corpse shirt, [and] you can't even get those albums there (they're totally censored). They're not allowed to play songs off their first three albums and crazy shit like that. It's just that the distributor doesn't wanna get shut down, 'cause if that kinda shit happens again, they could be in jeopardy of losing their whole company. They're not gonna take a gamble with somebody like us-like, who the fuck are we to them? So, I understand. But it really sucks, 'cause we're trying to get over to Europe. [...] Here we can get on really good tours, really nice, huge packages, and that's what we want [for Europe], but without good distribution, it's hard to do that. We're hoping the hype that comes from the banning of these covers makes people interested. I don't know what their deal is. We just know we wanna get over there. Same with Japan. [...] [What] we have to prove with this record is that we can live up to the hype, 'cause there was a lot of hype [that we didn't need] from our last record. With hype comes possible backlash. I can see that

SKRATCH: A couple of the guys in The Locust used to be in the band. You had them contribute to the record.

TRAVIS: Yeah. There are a couple parts that I thought [would be] really cool to maybe have them come in and do vocals. We got all of them except the one I really, really wanted to get, which was Joey. [...] But the other three dudes came in, and it made it sound really cool. It just adds a really weird vibe to it. And they're good friends of ours. Another reason we wanted to do it was because our old drummer would've never let something like that happen. He didn't wanna get very experimental at all. With this record, we were just like, "We're free!" you know? free of all kind of binds, and we

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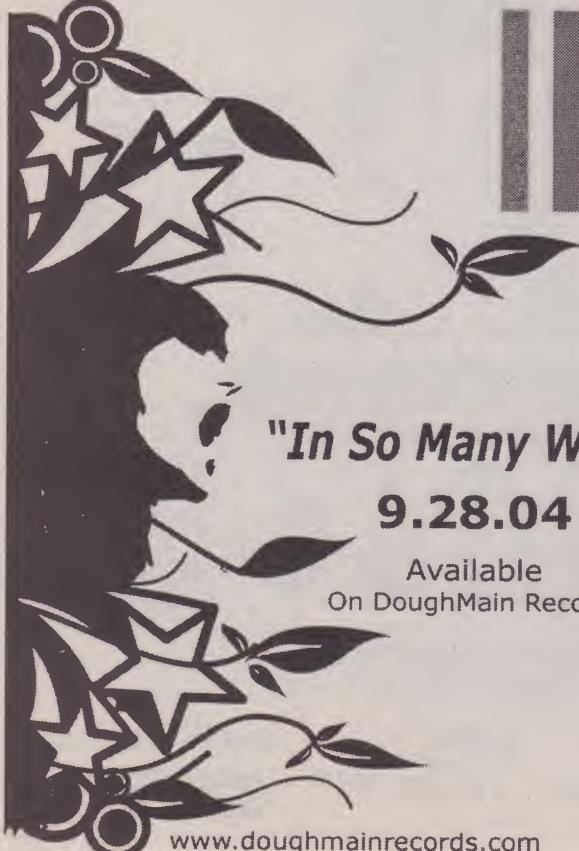


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SKRATCH: Are you well?
D: [Laughs] Yeah.



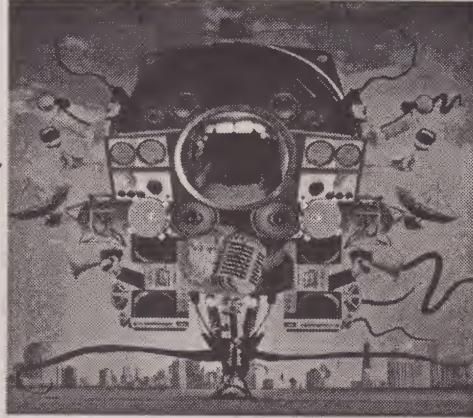
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TERROR
By Janelle Jones

While in Phoenix "getting ready for a nice 20-hour drive to Kansas City," I managed to get a hold of Terror vocalist Scott Vogel, who briefed me on all aspects of the band and their debut full-length, **ONE WITH THE UNDERDOGS** (Trustkill)—which just so happens to include guest vocals by Jamey Jasta, Freddy Cricien, and Lord Ezac. Utterly relentless and brutal, **UNDERDOGS** is sure to garner the successful hardcore band even more acclaim and undoubtedly add to the legions of fans who already know of Terror's sincerity to the scene and inexplicable propensity for writing some damn fine, crushing traditional hardcore songs.

SKRATCH: So, you're kinda injured?

SCOTT: Yeah, I hurt my neck. I had some slipped discs in my neck a couple years ago, and I just re-injured them, I guess. But I'm back. I missed like five shows because of it, but I've been back for about a week or two, so everything's okay, I hope.

SKRATCH: You re-injured it onstage?

SCOTT: Well, we'd been on tour for [about] two-and-a-half months, and I started to aggravate it, and it progressively (over maybe a two- or three-week period) just got worse and worse and worse, to the point where it got really bad. Sounds like a lot of fun, huh?

SKRATCH: That sucks to be on tour and have to sit out shows. But the band still played?

SCOTT: Yeah, we just switched the line-up up the best way we could, 'cause we didn't wanna cancel any shows. Our record had just come out, and we just had to do what we had to do.

SKRATCH: Can you go over how you guys got together?

SCOTT: Me and our drummer Nick are the only original members, and we started the band in (I think) 2002. Around April we played our first show. Both of us had been in previous bands that had broken up, and it was time to start something new, so we got together and started writing songs, put out a demo, and started playing shows.

SKRATCH: When you guys first got together, do you think people expected you to sound like the bands you were in previously at all?

SCOTT: Yeah. I think in some ways we do and some ways we don't. But I think people expect at least it to have the same energy and intensity—if your old bands DID have energy and intensity, which I think both of our old bands did. It's kind of a match between the two bands. I don't know what they expected. I don't know what we expected. We just got together and started writing songs. I was real happy, even with the very first song.

SKRATCH: And you've been well received even early on.

SCOTT: Yeah. It sucks!

SKRATCH: What?

SCOTT: No, I was just joking. Well, I think right from the start we've had people psyched about us. [...] We've had our share of crappy shows, but for the most part everything's been pretty good.

SKRATCH: Do you think maybe what sparked some people's interest was knowing you guys from *Buried Alive* and stuff?

SCOTT: You know, to a certain extent it gets people interested, but I think you still gotta back it up. I think sometimes that can work in a negative way, too, 'cause people expect a brand new band and compare it to your old band that's been around for years—and that's a hard

thing to live up to. It's hard to compare your demo to a band's full-length album just because [...] you need time to develop your

songwriting and stuff like that and get your sound. [...] I think it's cool [...] when you see bands that have ex-members of other bands, [because] it tells me that when their band broke up, they didn't just fade away or give up; they just picked up the pieces and started fresh, which is important to me, 'cause a lot of bands talk about how important music and hardcore is to them, and they're here today and then fade away so quick. To me that means they're really not into it.

SKRATCH: You guys have more of an East Coast sound...I'm thinking!

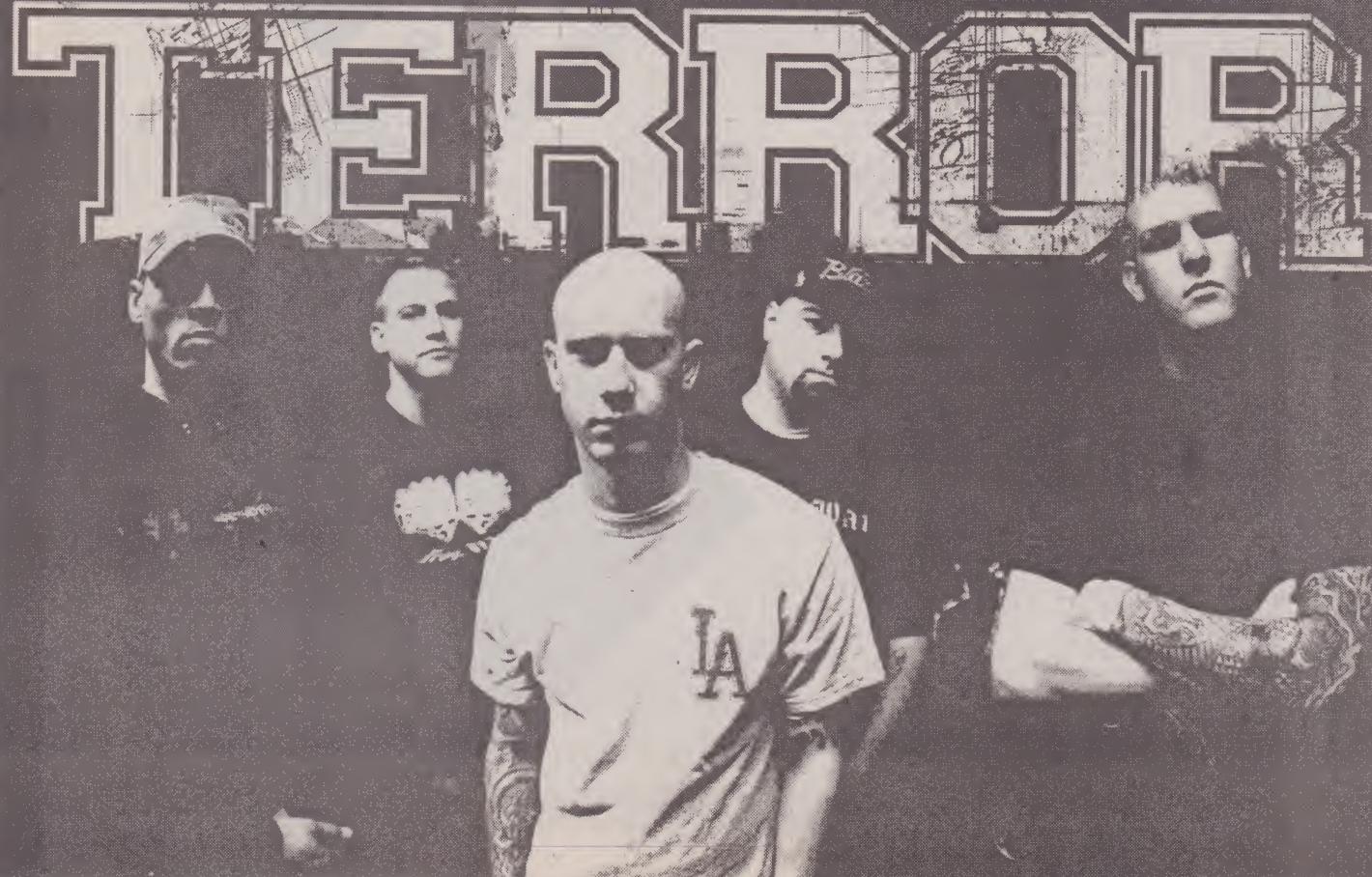
SCOTT: Um...You might be right. I mean, some of our biggest influences are Madball, Agnostic Front, Warzone, and Breakdown, maybe; but I think we're also influenced by Chain of Strength and Strife, so I don't know. I think our sound is just traditional hardcore with a little bit of metal thrown in—you know, just in your face, unrelenting or something. [Laughs] I don't know. I'm not sure.

SKRATCH: We have to talk about the album. Basically, what I get out of it is a lot of rising above, being true to yourself....

SCOTT: Sounds good; sounds like you're on point.

SKRATCH: ...As well as fighting in the face of adversity...but what else? Do you want to discuss any of it?

SCOTT: Yeah, I think that's pretty much the theme of the record. I mean, [the title] "**ONE WITH THE UNDERDOGS**" kinda means to me is that, you know, most of the people I know and that are involved in this music scene come from some bullshit or some fucked-up shit in their background, and I think we all come together from the things that are shoved in our face we don't wanna accept. "**ONE WITH THE UNDERDOGS**" means to me that if we all come together and stand as one, we can fight through all the bullshit that's thrown our



way. And on the flipside of that, I think a lot of the problems in the hardcore scene are caused by hardcore kids themselves, so if we continue on that path, there'll be a lot of bullshit still.

SKRATCH: Right. You guys in the band are pretty positive, I think.

SCOTT: Yeah, definitely, I think so. I think the whole idea is to get the problems of the world out in the open...and try to work on them to make tomorrow better, I guess.

SKRATCH: Is that a main message? Do you even have a main message?

SCOTT: I would say [that it's] just be yourself. Live life, 'cause it's short. Take advantage of the time you have and the friends you have. Does that sound weird? "Take advantage of the friends you have?" [Laughs] I guess that sounds like you should use your friends, huh?

SKRATCH: Well...

SCOTT: I know, you understand. You know, Janelle?

SKRATCH: Yeah, I think I do! Yeah, but you got some pretty good people to help you out on the album.

SCOTT: Hell yeah! Fuckin' amazing.

SKRATCH: How would you say this album differs from the EP?

SCOTT: We didn't really wanna flip things too much or change things up. We're really happy with our style and sound on the EP and the delivery, so I think we just wanted to take it to the next level and write a complete album. I don't think on an album every song should sound the same. There are songs on there that are really fast and short, and there's a couple songs that are even longer than two minutes or even three minutes, which is something we've never done before. There's some

necessary? Or was that the record label's idea?

SCOTT: Yeah, I don't know what the point of that is. I agree with what you're saying: there's a lot of fake bullshit out there. But I think we should let our music and lyrics do the talking. But, whatever. I don't know exactly what that was trying to get across. It's true, nonetheless! [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Yeah. Do you find anybody has misconceptions about the band that maybe you'd wanna clear up.

SKRATCH: Right, and that happens to everyone. Is there anything you wanna add?

SCOTT: Please pick up our record. And I wanna thank everyone who supports Terror and takes care of us. And thank you for asking us some questions.

Thanking people for supporting Terror...Hmmm.... There's something sinisterly funny about that. Anyway, check for info.

I GUESS THAT SOUNDS LIKE YOU SHOULD USE YOUR FRIENDS

mud-tempo songs. Like I said, I think generally we wanted to stay the same but just kinda take it one level up, make it more in-your-face, [have] more harder breakdowns, better lyrics, better songwriting. That was the plan, and I think we pulled it off. I like the record a lot.

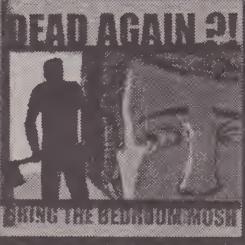
SKRATCH: [Laughs] All right. Just one little thing: on the CD case, it comes with a sticker saying, "This is real hardcore!" I know there's a lot of like fake hardcore bands or whatever, but why'd you think the label was

SCOTT: Well, I still probably get asked once every couple of weeks if I'm straight-edge, which I've never been. And, you know, I hear stupid things here and there, message board [stuff]—but nothing I'd really care to talk about. [That's] just stupid Internet talking.

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Underoath

By Mabel Lam

Photos by Kris McCaddon & David Stuart

Whether you're Christian or not, you have to admit that you probably threw up your hands in the air and yelled out "thank God!" when Creed announced their resignation in the music biz. The lustrous beam of light from above now fixates on Underoath, a Christian, Florida-based band that exudes raw emotion by successfully intertwining their beliefs with their ever-evolving music. Their latest release, **THEY'RE ONLY CHASING SAFETY**, only affirms their ability to make a smooth transition from their metal roots to a steadier pace of rock. And at the end of the day (as guitarist Tim McTague is so fond of saying), good music is good music, period.

SKRATCH: Before I start asking about Underoath in general, let me ask a couple of relevant questions about you. When did you first pick up a guitar?

TIM: I started playing when I was 15. On my 15th birthday, I got a crappy Squire Stratocaster and a cheap, like, 10-watt Crate combo, and I just started going from there. Me and my friends... dude, I don't even remember what grade it was... probably ninth grade started a band before we even owned any instruments. We decided what we were going to play, and I went to a music store down the street and rented a guitar and an amp for \$40 a month. It was terrible. It was so funny. We sucked really bad.

SKRATCH: So you went through the whole struggling-garage-band experience?

TIM: Yeah. I mean, we did everything. We started out in my friend's garage covering anything from MXPX to whatever. But we didn't want to cover other bands, so we started writing original punk songs... you know, just poppy things about girls who we thought were cute in class... just lame stuff. We played some birthday parties, and it was just good times, little kids enjoying themselves and having fun.

SKRATCH: Are you still that way today?

TIM: Yeah, for sure! I mean, the more involved and

committed I get, the more full-time and successful, the more business is involved. There are definitely a lot more politics and things to worry about than when I was 15, because now that we're 20-21 years old, we have a contract, a label, and all these legal bindings, and all this crap that really doesn't focus on music. It takes a lot of work to keep things focused on just having fun and being the same 15-year-old kid who just loves playing guitar and loves seeing kids at shows, just being able to play for people. I mean, we definitely work hard and worry about business that needs to be worried about, but we don't let it consume us. We're making the best out of it and not taking it for granted, because we know that it's a blessing.

SKRATCH: Since you and the other guys are Christians, are there any misconceptions about the band as a whole that you want to clear up?

TIM: As far as the Christian aspect, I think a lot of the kids just kinda like to talk. We've heard a lot of rumors, like that we're drug addicts or that we aren't Christians and never were. Underoath started out as a Christian band, and we still very much are. I mean, everyone in our band is Christian, everyone does their best to focus their life around Jesus. We really don't have a church or anywhere to go because we're always on the road, so everything we do is [done in the context of our having] a personal relationship with Christ, a personal conviction. I mean, we're humans and we mess up, but overall we're just... dudes. We don't mess around on tours with girls, we don't drink, we don't smoke... We don't really do anything. We try to live the most upright and holy lives that we can.

SKRATCH: So what do you think of other Christian bands? Take Creed, for example.

TIM: Well, I didn't even know they broke up. I honestly really don't care about Creed. [I don't mean that] in a mean way, [but]... musically, they're just not my thing. I hear a lot of rumors about that guy Stapp or Staff (whatever his name is). But I know at the end of the day how the media is, because we've been talked about on message boards by LITTLE kids. I'm sure bands like Creed have twice as many rumors and gossip. I really don't pay attention... especially with Creed,

just because I think their music is... not very good... whatsoever.

SKRATCH: Sucky.

TIM: [Relieved laugh] YEAH, you know what I'm talking about. I make it a point to never say a band sucks just because it's not my thing; but, basically, I think Creed is not very good... at all.

SKRATCH: Would you consider your music to be an outlet for expression with your beliefs?

TIM: Our music is an outlet for EVERYTHING. God is definitely our main focus [...] in our music. At the end of the day, I go through the same thing that anyone else goes through, whether they're Christian, Muslim, or Buddhists, or atheists, or anyone who doesn't even care. We have girlfriends who break up with us, friends who screw us over... A lot of our songs are just about LIFE and come from a Christian perspective. Our music deals with issues we feel are necessary to touch on, whether it's personal or our friends' lives or what we see in the world. Our music is just an open canvas; we can paint whatever we want, write whatever we want.

SKRATCH: The description of your upcoming release, **THEY'RE ONLY CHASING SAFETY**, says that you guys have been aiming for a "cleaner, more direct heavy rock style" that avoids hardcore clichés. How has this attempt turned out?

TIM: Obviously, we didn't write that bio. At the end of the day, we're just kind of a "band," and I think a lot of kids are holding on to Underoath as a dark, metal band.

SKRATCH: And from what I gather, your music seems to be uninfluenced and independent from both the critics' and fans' opinion. So who DOES influence Underoath then?

TIM: We write music for ourselves, and [our influences depend] on what we're listening to and what we're doing at that point. As far as caring what kids think about it, I mean, we really put a lot into our music, so it really does mean a lot to us when someone likes it... and kinda does hurt when we see kids hating it. But at the end of the day, we really write for our-

underoath



seives and hope that they like it. If not, we're still happy with where we're at musically. There are two bands that we do care about, though: Norma Jean and Beloved. We've grown up with those guys. Seeing each other grow musically [from] kids to young men, we really respect each other as people, and we really hold their opinion—musically, spiritually, and just personally—very high.

SKRATCH: As for the fans, though, is your biggest fan base at home, in Florida?

TIM: We do have a lot of FRIENDS in Florida, so our shows are fairly good, as far as attendance goes; but a lot of our fans here are really just friends. We don't like the impersonal band/fan relationship, because we know we're just normal dudes, we know we're not any-

thing really special. Overall, yeah, Florida, California, and New Jersey are our best drawing cities. We have the best shows in Southern California.

SKRATCH: MTV or Clear Channel?

TIM: They're both just good companies out there for money. At the end of the day, the corporate offices don't really care about Tim McTague from Underoath.. But overall, I'd pick MTV, just for opening the door with HEADBANGERS BALL and all these guys in the hardcore scene.

SKRATCH: In the title, "THEY'RE ONLY CHASING SAFETY," who are "they"?

TIM: "They" is just a broad title. It goes back to ourselves, our friends and family going through situations.

If I could sit down with God and have an audible conversation, if He looked down on the world and asked me "What's up?" or "Sum up life down there in a single sentence." I'd tell him that they're only chasing safety. It's about people running from problems—regardless of what they are—not going towards the positive goal, just kinda going for the quick fix.

SKRATCH: Lastly, what's the one golden rule in the music industry?

TIM: For us, if we had a rulebook for tour, life, or just in music, our first rule would be: Remember where you came from.

Check out <http://www.underoath777.com> for more info on their latest release and tour dates.

Our music is just an open canvas; we can paint whatever we want, write whatever we want



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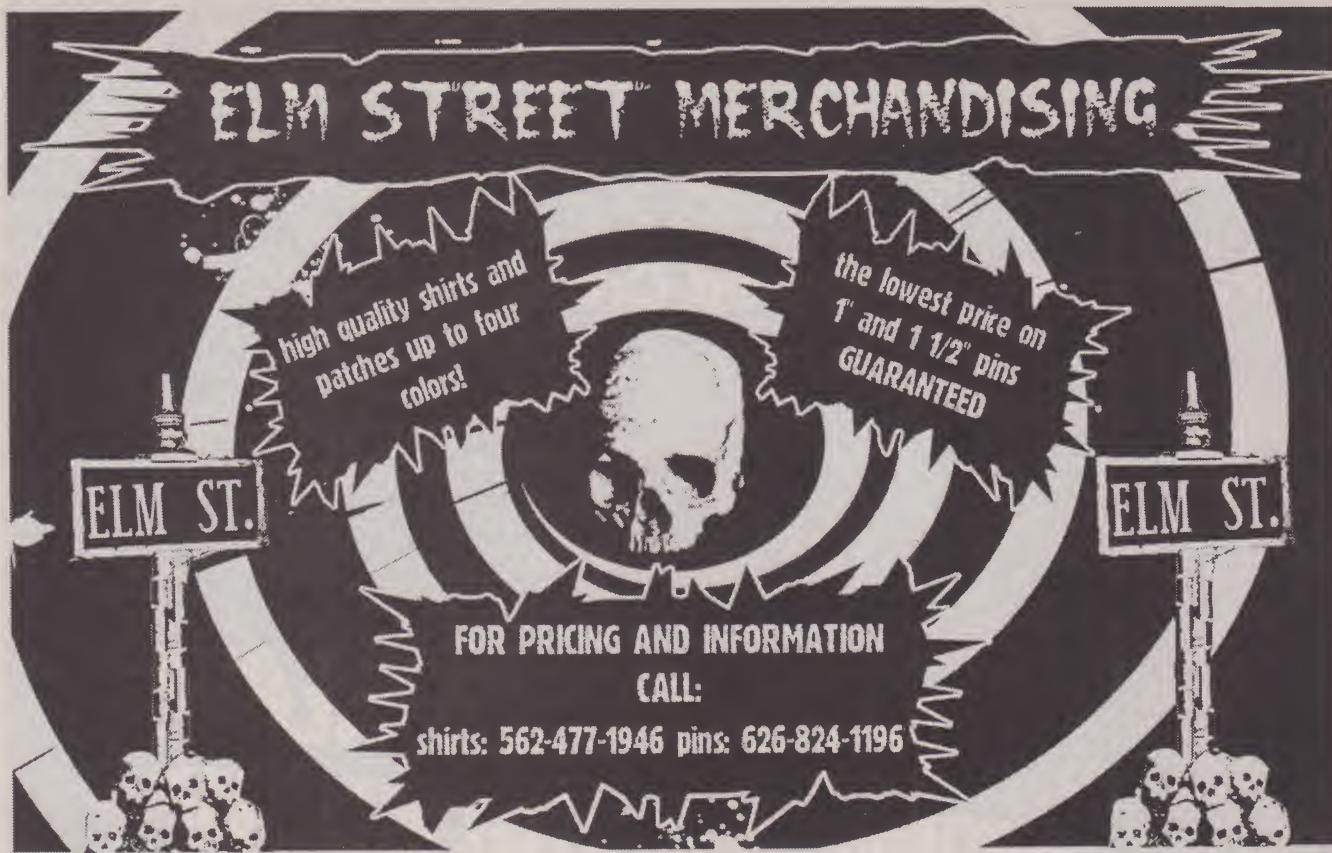
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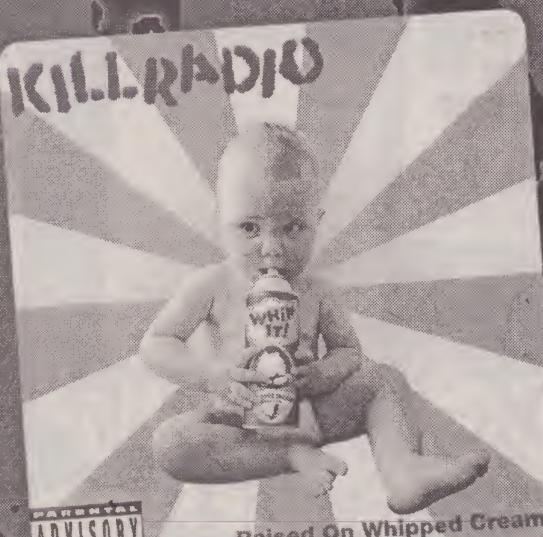
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HOT ROD CIRCUIT

Interview (via telephone) by Annette Ovanessian

Whether they represent Connecticut or Alabama, Hot Rod Circuit is from a small community of musicians desperately in search of recognition. Luckily for Hot Rod Circuit, Vagrant Records gave them a chance to shine onto the rest of the world. Being able to tour all over the U.S. has really exposed them to the music scene of the more popular cities and the more curious critics. Known as an "emo" band with softer lyrics and tuneful musical harmonies, their new album, *REALITY'S COMING THROUGH*, places them into a new category of modern "rock." With hammering drum beats, racy guitar hooks, and harder vocals, the new Hot Rod Circuit reaches out beyond the emo scene and into the pop/rock world. Believing that their new producer, Tim O'Heir, has shaped this album to perfection, they only wish each record could sound as good.

SKRATCH: Chances are that people like us ([i.e.,] from Los Angeles) have never been to Connecticut or Alabama and probably have a wrong picture of what it's like out there. What is it like?

ANDY: I live in Alabama right now. The band is from Connecticut. People think Alabama is some hillbilly town, that everybody has a pickup truck and overalls. They think everybody's a redneck. But when it really comes down to it, we've traveled the world, and we've seen more rednecks in California than on all of the East Coast. People definitely paint a wrong picture about Alabama. It's not my favorite place in the world, but the cost of living is really good [...] and there's not a lot of crime.

SKRATCH: How about the music scene?

ANDY: Growing up, there were some kind of small things going on. There are a lot of bands from here, bands I grew up with here, like Man or Astroman or a band called The Woggles. It was more like a punk-rock scene here. There's not really a music scene here. There are more and more bands kind of popping up, and there's a lot of good musicians and good bands here; they just get stuck here because of the location and they don't know what to do, and there's really no where to go play.

SKRATCH: Is Hot Rod Circuit the biggest local band?

ANDY: We don't consider ourselves from Alabama, because we pretty much started our career in Connecticut. But in Montgomery there's a band called Trust Company. They're a big MTV rock band. [So] we'd be [considered] the indie rock band out here, I guess.

SKRATCH: The two-year gap in-between your new album and your previous album must have offered you guys more time to spend writing songs and putting them together. What was the process of working on the new album like?

ANDY: I had moved back to Alabama, so I wasn't around the guys, and we did have a lot longer to make a record (whereas before we were putting out a record like every year). After *SORRY ABOUT TOMORROW* came out, we took about a two-year break. I've been writing songs since the day *SORRY ABOUT TOMORROW* was done, so, going into [the recording of the new album], I think I had 37 songs written. Jay had a handful and Casey had a couple songs, so we had a lot material to [...] make a solid record out of. With previous records, we would record 11 to 12 songs, and that's all we had. This record feels really whole and feels like a really tight unit. I think it's because I spent so much time writing so many different songs.

SKRATCH: What steps are involved during the process of building songs together as a band?

ANDY: As far as this record goes, I recorded a lot of songs playing the drums, bass, guitar, and vocals, doing all the parts. Then I gave those songs to the band. I felt like doing that. It gives them an idea of where I want to go with the songs, but at the same time it opens their mind up to try something a little different. I guess it's kind of like a guideline for them to go by, but it seems like this time around it really did something, because it really challenged everybody, and it all came together. The songs all fold together.

SKRATCH: Is the title of the new album, "REALITY'S COMING THROUGH," a symbolic phrase that somehow relates to the thought of growing up and learning to accept the truth about reality?

ANDY: Well, it does, and it sums up the record itself, but there's also an inside joke to the title. The title came from a movie called *DRUMMER 23*. It's a documentary on this guy, and he's making this metal record. It's kind of like a *THIS IS SPINAL TAP*-type movie, but it's real. There's a phrase that's in the movie, and it's like, "There's too much reality come through." That was a movie we were constantly watching in the studio. The title just kind of stuck with us, and we just shortened it a little bit.

SKRATCH: As I was paying attention to the lyrics, I came across some lyrics that were pretty deep, like, "I feel like a failure / This world has no meaning / Wish I could die." I think that these are the types of feelings that one goes through when the discovery of reality is starting to make sense. Do you disagree?

ANDY: I totally agree with you. I think those are things that everybody deals with, no matter what level you are at spiritually. I think those are some of the most honest lyrics I've ever written.

SKRATCH: Also mentioned in your bio is that you guys believe this album to be your best yet. Why do you think so?

ANDY: Definitely. It's just the first time I've ever made a record and can listen to it and it really puts a smile on my face and I'm proud of it. I don't hear things—like vocal things—that drive me crazy, that I don't like...or guitar things. Tim O'Heir did a great job mixing it and putting it together, and it kind of scares me at the same time, because I worry that we won't ever make a record that good again—unless we do it with Tim.

SKRATCH: What will be the extent of touring this year and next? What bands will Hot Rod Circuit be touring with?

ANDY: We're taking out this band called Say Anything. They're amazing. We're also taking Straylight Run, and I guess Northstar is going to do some of the tour, too.

SKRATCH: Are you guys coming back to Los Angeles?

ANDY: The tour starts October 15th, so I would say [that we'll be there] towards the end of October.

Visit www.hotrodcircuit.com for more news and information.

Misery
Signals
Interview by Melissa Wong

Many bands have special stories about the trials and tribulations of touring full-time, ranging from side projects becoming successful to nasty band breakups. However, for Midwestern band Misery Signals, a band breakup was actually the start of a remarkable beginning. MS came about after the split of 7 Angels 7 Plagues in the summer of 2002. When 7 Angels 7 Plagues decided to quit school to focus on the band, the drummer had a sudden change of heart when the guys went into the studio. Instead of letting this spiral downward, guitarist Ryan Morgan and bassist Kyle Johnson decided to start a new band. Misery Signals formed in the fall of 2002 and released a self-titled EP in 2003. This June, MS released its debut album, *OF MALICE AND THE MAGNUM HEART* on Ferret Music. Earlier this year, you might have caught the guys on the Ferret Tour with Scarlet and Zao. This fall, you can find them on tour with The Dillinger Escape Plan.

In a phone interview, I spoke with bassist Kyle Johnson about...opportunities, Twelve Tribes, and possibly touring overseas. Misery Signals is Jesse Zaraska on vocals, Kyle Johnson on bass, Branden Morgan on drums, and both Ryan Morgan and Stuart Ross on guitar.

SKRATCH: When did the band form?
JOHNSON: We got together around September/October of 2002, and it was Ryan and I from the beginning. Our drummer had quit in the studio because he had a sudden change of heart as soon as we had all decided to do it full-time. He kind of left us hanging, so we decided to start a new band.

SKRATCH:

I'm sure it was really tough for you guys to be left short of a drummer—especially when you hit the studio. I think it's great that you guys kept the momentum going and started Misery Signals. What made you decide not to just give up?

JOHNSON: A lot of people never make it out of their local scene. [The band] was and has been a great opportunity for us—not just to possibly make a lot of money, but we're very proud to make music and tour the world. [Laughs] Plus, getting out of this shithole of a town that I live in (suburbs of Milwaukee) would be great. But [...] it is very hard to break out of your hometown, so we were glad to take an opportunity and see where it would take us.

SKRATCH: Wise decision. I think your debut album, *OF MALICE AND THE MAGNUM HEART*, turned out awesome. Tell me about recording the album.

JOHNSON: It was an amazing experience. We spent the whole month of February working on it. Jesse had been friends with Devin Townsend for about six or seven years. Devin's worked with metal bands such as Lamb of God, Stuck Mojo, and Soilwork. He gave us a reasonable price for our budget, and he enjoyed what we were doing on our EP. We spent about four months writing songs in Canada, and then we went to Vancouver to record vocals.

SKRATCH: My favorite track on the album is "Singing in the Rain". Do you have any favorite tracks off the album?

JOHNSON: My personal favorite is probably track 4. [...] "In Five Years" is my favorite song lyrically and as far as vocal patterns are concerned.

SKRATCH: Best albums ever?

JOHNSON: Pink Floyd's *THE WALL*, The Get Up Kids' *ONE MINUTE MILE*, The Beatles' *ABBEY ROAD*, and Mineral's *POWER OF FALLING*.

SKRATCH: Influences in your songwriting?

JOHNSON: Melodic bands: Cave-in, Glassjaw; and also some heavier bands, like Metallica. Mainly, lots of metal bands. I mean, we're influenced by everything. [...] We all listen to a lot of the same stuff when we're in the van.

SKRATCH: What is in your CD player right now?

JOHNSON: Muse, The Hives, Supertramp, and any '80s compilation that I've made. [Laughs] I'm a big fan of the '80s.

SKRATCH: Awesome. Me, too! The '80s were good times. I mean, we were made in the '80s...right? [Laughs] How old are you guys, anyway?

JOHNSON: We are 20, 21, 22, 23, and 25.

SKRATCH: What are some interesting things about each member of the band?

JOHNSON: I do construction work—and I weigh, like, 140 lbs. I'm like the skinniest twig ever, so people probably wouldn't have any clue that I did that kind of work. Our singer smokes a lot of pot, which I really wouldn't guess [if I didn't know him]. We have two Canadians in the band...which, actually, I don't think makes a difference, because it's not like they look particularly different or anything. [Laughs] I don't know. A couple of us are vegan and straight-edge. Oh, and our guitarist works at an old folks' home and wipes people's asses. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Are you currently reading anything?

JOHNSON: I'm reading this book my girlfriend gave me called *DESPERATION*. It's a Stephen King novel. I'm not much of an avid reader...not really. [Laughs] But I'm trying.

SKRATCH: When did you first get involved with music?

JOHNSON: During high school, for the most part. I started playing guitar when I was 15. I started my first band shortly after I learned how to play, and I have just been playing in bands since then. When I was 18, I was in my first hardcore band. I switched from playing guitar to playing bass in 7 Angels 7 Plagues.

SKRATCH: Have you ever thought about doing cover songs?

JOHNSON: Well, we've toyed with the idea before, but we all have such different ideas of what we'd like to cover [that] I think it'd be impossible to pick one song. [Laughs] I don't really know. Maybe one day....

SKRATCH: Are there been any upcoming bands that have caught your attention lately?

JOHNSON: We just got off tour with another Ferret band, Twelve Tribes, and I think they have lots of potential. They've been a band for some time, but they recently decided to change what they're doing—and I think it's great. It really grew on me, and I've enjoyed playing shows with them. Usually nothing catches me. Oh, and *Bury Your Dead* is good traditional hardcore.

SKRATCH: Where are you guys touring this year?

JOHNSON: We've been playing dates with All Out War, Six Feet Under, Scarlet, and Zao on the Ferret Tour. We also have some June and July dates with *A Life Once Lost* and *A Perfect Murder*. Then we'll be playing Hellfest July 23-25th. In September, we'll be touring with Six Feet Under and one other band. In October, we're going to be a part of The Dillinger Escape Plan tour. As far as in the future, we'd definitely like to tour Europe, and places like Australia and Japan are in the works. Maybe early next year? I'm not sure when, but it's definitely going to happen.

Thanks for taking the time to talk to me, Kyle. Good luck on tour, and I'll see you guys at the CBGB show in July. Check out their mp3 for "The Summer Ended in June" and Misery Signals tour dates at .

MISERY SIGNALS



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TSUNAMI BOMB

Tsunami
Bomb
By Sarah Laidlaw

AFI bassist Hunter Bergan is said to have founded Tsunami Bomb when his label, Checkmate Records, put out Tsunami Bomb's first release. Started in 1999 as a project by four friends in the Petaluma, CA, punk scene, Tsunami Bomb has forced their sound into as many ears as possible with their rigorous touring schedule, which they have kept up since their inception. Their dedication is paying off with a growing popularity across the U.S. and in Japan. Tsunami Bomb is set to release their third album, *DEFINITIVE ACT*, on September 21 and head out on their first headlining tour across all reaches of the U.S. this summer. Other than their amazing sound, one of Tsunami Bomb's main attractions is their vocalist, Agent M. She has made a huge impact on the punk scene as a woman who has the power and energy needed to engage our beloved punk rockers.

Agent M chatted to me about everything from her start in music to touring with Tsunami Bomb.

SKRATCH: How did you get into music?

AGENT M: Mostly by [listening to] Green Day. I listened to music a little bit before I had heard of them, but after I'd heard of them, I knew music was my calling. I listened to it all day, and I loved it so much that I wanted to be a part of it, so I worked on being in a band from there.

SKRATCH: What influences your lyric writing?

AGENT M: I have a notebook that I take with me everywhere. I free-write in it when there are situations that I know I can write a song about. I will just start writing everything that I can think of while trying to write some things that are kind of poetic or sound like they could be in a song. Then, after the music is written, I go back and look at my subjects to see which one I think would go with what music. Then, I formulate it into a melody and get the song.

SKRATCH: I know that your original bassist, Dominic, left the band. Why?

AGENT M: He's been out of the band for almost

a year. We kicked him out. Basically, it was just everyday disagreements [...]. It was just something that the rest of us thought we needed to do to continue.

SKRATCH: I know you get this question a lot, but why don't you let anybody know your real name?

AGENT M: Because it's fun. It's really entertaining to have people come up to me and be, like, "Please tell me your name, please tell me your name." It's also really entertaining that they don't know my name because there have been a lot of times that it's been published and it's been said other places.

SKRATCH: Why "Agent M"?

AGENT M: It is actually a nickname given to me by Dominic as a stage name. Everyone else that I knew had a stage name, and I dressed up like a spy for Halloween, so he said my stage name should be Agent M.

SKRATCH: How is the *DEFINITIVE ACT* different from *THE ULTIMATE ESCAPE*?

AGENT M: I think the songwriting has definitely progressed. We are more... It's hard to describe it without using the word "mature," [because] that really does sum it up. We have been doing this for a while, and as time progresses, so does our musicianship. I feel like [this album] is a little more musical and maybe a little less catchy; but I really don't think the style of it is that much different.

SKRATCH: What do you want kids to get out of your music?

AGENT M: Personally, the message that I would like to convey to everyone is

just that life is really great and you can do whatever you want with it. That's what I feel like I've gotten out of my experience with the band, because I have done so many amazing things that I never thought I would get to do—and I don't really feel like I'm any more qualified than the next person. I feel like people should take their goals seriously and do exactly what they want, because they can.

SKRATCH: What do you think you'd be doing if you weren't in the band?

AGENT M: One of my main interests besides being in the band is foreign language. I think I would probably be doing something with that. If the band were to end, I think I would try and teach English overseas. I really love traveling and learning about other cultures.

SKRATCH: What other languages do you speak?

AGENT M: I've taken a lot of Spanish, and I took a little bit of French. Right now, I'm working on a German program. The language I really want to learn is Japanese, but that just seems really hard. We toured Japan last year, and it was so



fun and amazing. I really love Japan, so I want

Sometimes we stay at kids' houses and see how they eat their breakfast in the

to be able to go back and travel there without having any language barriers.

SKRATCH: How do you work up the energy to perform and create your intense stage presence?

AGENT M: It is probably because I just really love singing and performing. Sometimes it even surprises me. Like, sometimes I'm just in a bad mood or really not wanting to play a show at all, and then as soon as I get on stage and start singing,

morning, stuff like that. And sometimes we create really strong friendships with the other bands that we get to tour with. It's not like any other job. The bad part for me is just not having any sort of set pattern to your day. Your life is not very solid when you are touring. Because you're in a different town every day, you are switching the place where you sleep every day, and you don't know what you're going to eat. It's just little things like that that burn me out sometimes.

SKRATCH: To what do you attribute your

"We've been touring for about five years constantly, and it's definitely the number-one contribution to where we are now."

it's just really fun. It's what I love to do.

SKRATCH: How is touring when you are the only girl in the van?

AGENT M: I don't think it's really hard. I'm used to being with all guys. I have four brothers, so it's not like a disadvantage to me. Sometimes we have Jen as our merch girl. When we do have her on the tour, it's nice to have somebody to go shopping with and just be a girl with. It's nice to have another girl on tour, but I don't think it's really necessary.

SKRATCH: What are your favorite and least favorite parts of touring?

AGENT M: My favorite parts are definitely the traveling. Getting to see all the places that we've been is really amazing to me, [as well as] getting to meet all the people that we wouldn't normally meet. It's really awesome, because we really get to know their culture and see what it's like in other places in the world.

strong U.S. following?

AGENT M: The amount of touring that we've done, definitely. We've been touring for about five years constantly, and it's definitely the number-one contribution to where we are now. We don't have very many albums and we're not on the radio or MTV or anything. It might take a long time, but I think touring is the best way for a band to build a strong fan base and loyalty, because you go out and talk to everyone and meet everyone at the shows.

SKRATCH: I read that Chris Roe feels Kung Fu Records screwed The Ataris over. How do you feel about Kung Fu?

AGENT M: We have kind of a weird relationship with Kung Fu. We had a little bit of a problem recently with our record coming out, but it is going to come out, so we're on better terms now.

SKRATCH: Would you ever

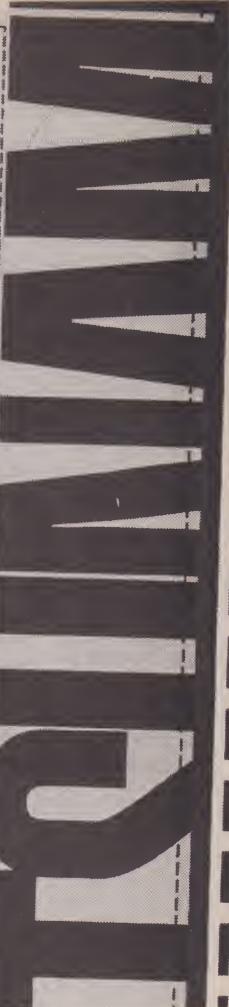
sign to a major label?

AGENT M: It would depend on the deal. We're not opposed to signing to a major label, but it would have to be a good deal, because you hear about a lot of bands that just really get screwed over. It seems like the same problems that you have at a smaller label, but on a much larger scale.

SKRATCH: Where do you see Tsunami Bomb going?

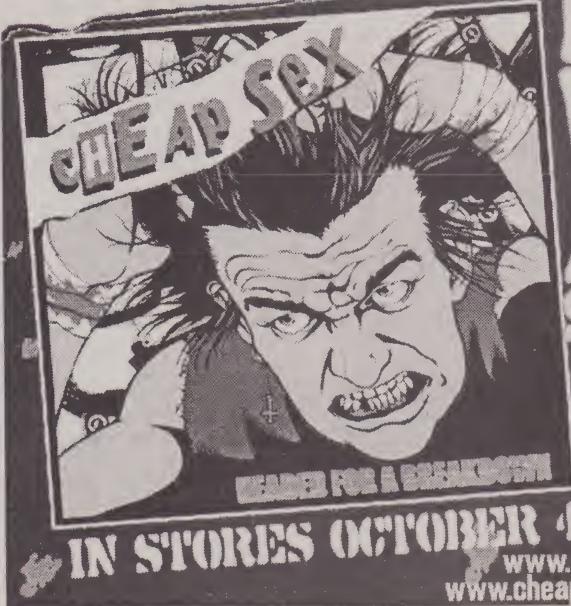
AGENT M: It's hard to say, because we don't really have any set goals. We did have set goals to become a band that tours as our jobs, and we've done that, so now we are just going along and seeing how far we can get with it.

Check out their new and old albums and find out when they will be playing in your town at <http://www.tsunamibomb.com>.



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THE BRIEFS
By Marcus Solomon

Paragons of punk integrity, The Briefs refused to water down and change the music in order to fit the expectations of a major label. Instead of going "Blink" and reaping the benefits of sacrificing soul for cash, this band took the severance check and spent it all on new equipment before once again hitting the road, poor and weird. The Briefs is a refreshing, manic musical machine that epitomizes what the punk-rock world should be: fast, intense, creative, unpredictable, and fun.

The Briefs:

Steve E. Nix—guitar, vocals
Lance Romance—bass, vocals
Chris P. Briefs—drums, vocals
Daniel J. Travanti—guitar, vocals

SKRATCH: Where are you now?

STEVE: [On cell phone] We are just pulling into Denver. What's your name again?

SKRATCH: Marcus, I am the guy who gave you my 'zine with your interview in it.

STEVE: Oh yeah: NOTHING. That's one of my favorites.

SKRATCH: My girlfriend wants to know if you will lick her butt.

STEVE: What? What kind of interview are you trying to do? Is it clean?

SKRATCH: Yeah, it's clean, but she's dirt-tee.

STEVE: Um, no, I won't. [Laughs]



SKRATCH:

The Briefs are getting a lot of radio play on Indie 103.1 FM in Los Angeles.

STEVE: Really? What are they playing?

SKRATCH: Something from the new album [SEX OBJECTS]. I don't know all the names of the songs yet. Did Lance Romance leave the band?

STEVE: No, he's just not on tour right now. We got this guy named Kicks from the band New Town

Animals. He is filling in for a couple months while we do some rigorous touring. They are one of our favorite bands, and we are fortunate to have them on tour with us. Denver is our last show of this two-month tour. We have been playing every night since we last talked with

you at the Showcase Theatre [on 4/18/04].

SKRATCH: Every night?

STEVE: Every night except for like two or three.

SKRATCH: How do you keep going? A lot of caffeine?

STEVE: Yeah, but we are holding up pretty good. It's been a good tour, and we are driving home tonight after the show.

SKRATCH: How has the crowd attendance been for this tour?

STEVE: It's been pretty good, for the most part. It's been a couple of years since we last hit the East Coast and the Midwest. But frankly, the South sucks. We don't play there, so they don't really dig what we are doing.

SKRATCH: Emo? Is mopecore still around?

STEVE: I guess so, with a Southern twist. But it was good to get back to the East Coast and to do a whole U.S. tour. We went through Virginia, Philadelphia, New Jersey, New Brunswick [Canada], Brooklyn, Boston, Chicago.

SKRATCH: What happened with the major label? I was told they buried your entire new album and now you are on BYO Records.

STEVE: Our first two albums are on Dirtmap Records, which is based in Seattle. Then we hooked up with major label Interscope, and we got dumped. They gave us a bunch of money, and that was really cool. I guess they realized they really didn't like us. I guess we were not what they wanted us to be. They thought they were getting Sum 41 or some shit like that.

SKRATCH: Interscope is dumb. Did they keep the album you did for them?

STEVE: No, they gave it to us—and then they had to pay us more money.

SKRATCH: Good for you, then! Sounds like a little "rock 'n' roll swindle"!

STEVE: In a sense. We did as much as we could for them. But that was



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then, and now we are out here, barely afloat.

SKRATCH: I hope things take off for you again. Today, I played some of your music for one of my students, and she liked it, so I sent her to Dr. Strange Records.

STEVE: Dr. Strange—there's some cool people.

SKRATCH: I concur. What's next after you return home?

STEVE: Another tour of about four weeks down the West Coast and a little bit in the South, and then we are off to Europe.

SKRATCH: Where are you going in Europe?

STEVE: A lot: Germany, Austria, Scandinavia, Switzerland, England (where we got some people waiting for us, so that will be really cool)... pretty much the whole U.K. We have been to Europe a couple of times.

SKRATCH: You lucky bastards. [Laughs]

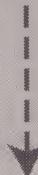
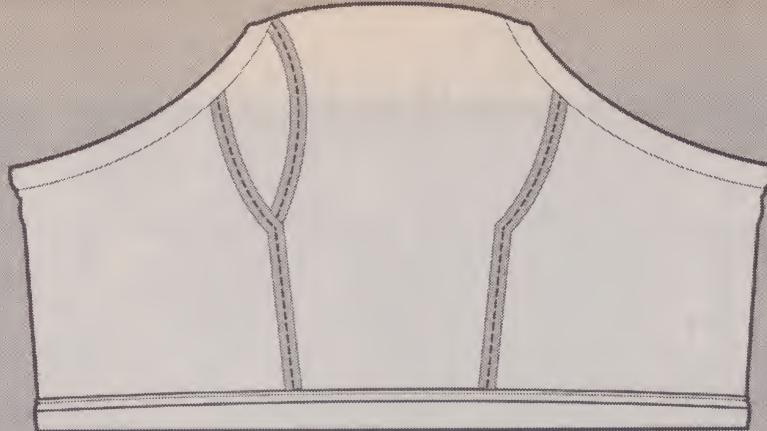
STEVE: Yeah, but it's still pretty hard work, too. We are fortunate that we do pretty well in Europe.

SKRATCH: Will you get a chance to see the sights?

STEVE: A little bit—you know, visit a few castles and all that. It's totally cool, especially in Barcelona, Spain, with the beach, the museums. And maybe we'll play a show [the night we're there].

SKRATCH: It sounds like an amazing experience. Is BYO taking care of the European tour?

STEVE: No, we just started work-



"They gave us a bunch of money, and that was really cool."

ing with BYO. The new record, **SEX OBJECTS**, is scheduled to come out on June 29th. They are taking care of other things like making sure it gets to a lot of radio stations. We are very fortunate to be working with this label.

SKRATCH: How did you come to find yourself on the BYO label?

STEVE: Actually, they had been bugging us for something like two years. [Laughs] It just seemed like the right thing to do.

SKRATCH: Who was bugging you, the Stern Brothers?

STEVE: Yes.

SKRATCH: The Briefs have a very loyal following, and that bodes well for BYO.

STEVE: Yeah, but we are not out here trying to be rock stars; we are just out here trying to play shows every night. Some people are into

us, and I really appreciate that.

SKRATCH: I appreciate the fact that your band is injecting the fun back into the punk scene. A lot of bands take themselves way too seriously.

STEVE: A lot of people are way too fuckin' self-important—whether it's in the punk rock scene or whatever. Who fuckin' cares?

SKRATCH: It's also good to know the real thing still exists.

STEVE: Yeah. A lot of what they are trying to pass off as punk rock, isn't. I guess a lot of people know that.

SKRATCH: True, but even poseurs have potential, and perhaps they may actually stumble upon **The Briefs**.

STEVE: Well, we try to be creative, and the things we do. It might not be what's in style for what is going on right now, but I'll bet that if we did something like a two-chord **Exploited**-style rip-off, we would be huge.

SKRATCH: Most people listen with their eyes and not their ears. Wear the right punk rock uniform and be a big hit. That's lame.

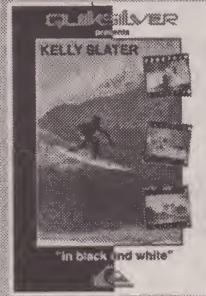
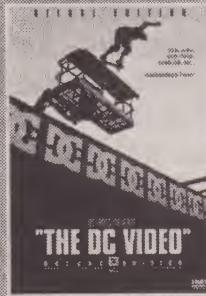
STEVE: Right. But don't get me wrong: our style is just as retarded as anyone else's.

Hey, retard! Close your eyes and LISTEN to the new album, **SEX OBJECTS**. If you do not grow a knowing smile and the irresistible urge to pogo while wearing silly clothes, you fail Elementary Punk Rock 101 and must listen to Avril Lavigne for the rest of your life.

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THE BRIGGS
By Janelle Jones

Calling from Oklahoma City while driving to Chicago and gearing up to join the second half of the Warped Tour, The Briggs' frontman Joey LaRocca discussed in great detail their latest record (and first for SideOneDummy), a six-song powerhouse of an EP entitled LEAVING THE WAYS (which was to be released just a couple days after our conversation). With new bass player Charlie on hand, the guys brothers Joey and guitarist Jason, along with drummer Chris Know have a stable line-up in place just in time for a season of seemingly endless touring.

SKRATCH: Have you been playing any dates where you've played some of the new material off the EP yet?

JOEY: Yeah, actually: we did a two-week tour with Lower Class Brats, and we tried out quite a few of the new songs and got a really good response.

SKRATCH: You had Joe Gittleman produce the EP, and he played bass on it, too. Did the partnership come about because Avoid One Thing is on SideOneDummy, as well, or did you want to work with him, anyway?

JOEY: Actually, it came about because we had done the Warped Tour two years ago with Mighty Mighty Bosstones (they were on that year, as well), and we got to know the guys. When we were through, we were in Boston playing with Street Dogs, and Joe came to the show and then took us out for lunch the next day. We were just hanging out and talking, and we were just off-handedly discussing our next record coming out on SideOne and blah blah blah, and he was like, "Yeah, if you want me to produce it, I would totally love to work with you guys." We were like, "Yeah, that's cool." It wasn't really decided right then; it was just kinda talk. But when it rolled around, it just ended up falling into place and working out, so we flew to Boston and recorded with him.

SKRATCH: So you don't have a bassist right now?

JOEY: Now we do; we have a new bass player.

SKRATCH: Full-time and everything?

JOEY: Yeah.

SKRATCH: What's his name?

JOEY: His name's Charlie. We're showing him the ropes, [and] putting him through hell.

SKRATCH: That's pretty cool, though, starting out with Warped.

JOEY: Yeah, it's quite a thing to jump into. He gets to jump right into these national tours and stuff. It's good for him.

SKRATCH: Back to the record... How would you say it differs from past releases?

JOEY: Well, I think with any band especially with our band it's just constant evolution, constant evolution of what's really you, what's really your sound and your style. It's not even really intentional; it's something that just kinda happens gradually with each release. So, I think it's just more us, basically.

SKRATCH: Overall, you have that anthemic sound, but you guys incorporate different styles—like, "All on Me" is hardcore, and then "Top 40" is pretty diverse. Can you talk about that song musically?

JOEY: We've always prided ourselves on having a lot of different influences and a lot of different styles as one of the things we are influenced by musically. I think we like to show as many of those sides I'm sorry, I'm being interrupted. So, yeah, we like to try... Can you hold on one second? [In the background he talks about getting to Chicago] So anyway, yeah, that was just one of the many facets of the band. It's one thing we're into. We're all big fans of reggae and The Clash and stuff like that, so it just kinda has that feel to it. And lyrically, it's just a...you know, [we're] kind of annoyed at the present-day pop scene—which is obviously clichéd. It's something that annoys the hell out of me, so I had to write a song about it.

SKRATCH: [The EP] comes out in a few days. Do you guys personally do anything special when records come out? Do you have any, like Ed, you have a toast or something to celebrate in any way?

JOEY: [Laughs] You know, that was such a really good idea. I don't think we ever have. But, no, not necessarily. We just kind of ENO! [Laughs]

SKRATCH: What does the title (LEAVING THE WAYS) refer to?

JOEY: The album has a whole nautical/pirate kinda feel to it, so we were just looking for something that represented that in a way and was somewhat of a metaphor, because "leaving the ways" is a nautical term for, basically, when a ship sets sail and is released from the waystation that those things are called, the stumps that [the ship is] up on when they build it. They let it in the water off the ways [...] So it's kinda like we're "setting sail on a new horizon" kinda thing.

SKRATCH: Do you have more material written for an upcoming full-length?

JOEY: We're working on it. We have a full-length coming out on SideOne next year. We're gonna be writing that pretty soon. We haven't quite had a lot of time to work on it; we've been on the road a lot. But yeah, it's in the works.

SKRATCH: Speaking of touring, I saw you're gonna be going out with [labelmates] Flogging Molly and Street Dogs in September. After that you're gonna start writing, you think?

JOEY: Actually, after that there's a pretty good chance we're going to Europe with Flogging Molly, as well, and that's gonna be another month, so we probably won't be home till December. We'll probably start working on it then, 'cause I think we'll all be ready for a little bit of a break from the road and have time to sit at home and write some music.

SKRATCH: Is there anything you guys want people to know about the band?

JOEY: No, I don't want them to know anything about the band, actually! [Laughs]

SKRATCH: [Laughs] Ugh, okay!

JOEY: In terms of views or something like that?

SKRATCH: Just anything in particular about the band.

JOEY: Our drummer's a sex machine. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: That's the most important thing.

JOEY: We want the whole world to know. There's a whole lotta lovin'. [Laughter]

SKRATCH: How about... Are there any misconceptions you find people have about the band that maybe you wanna clear up?

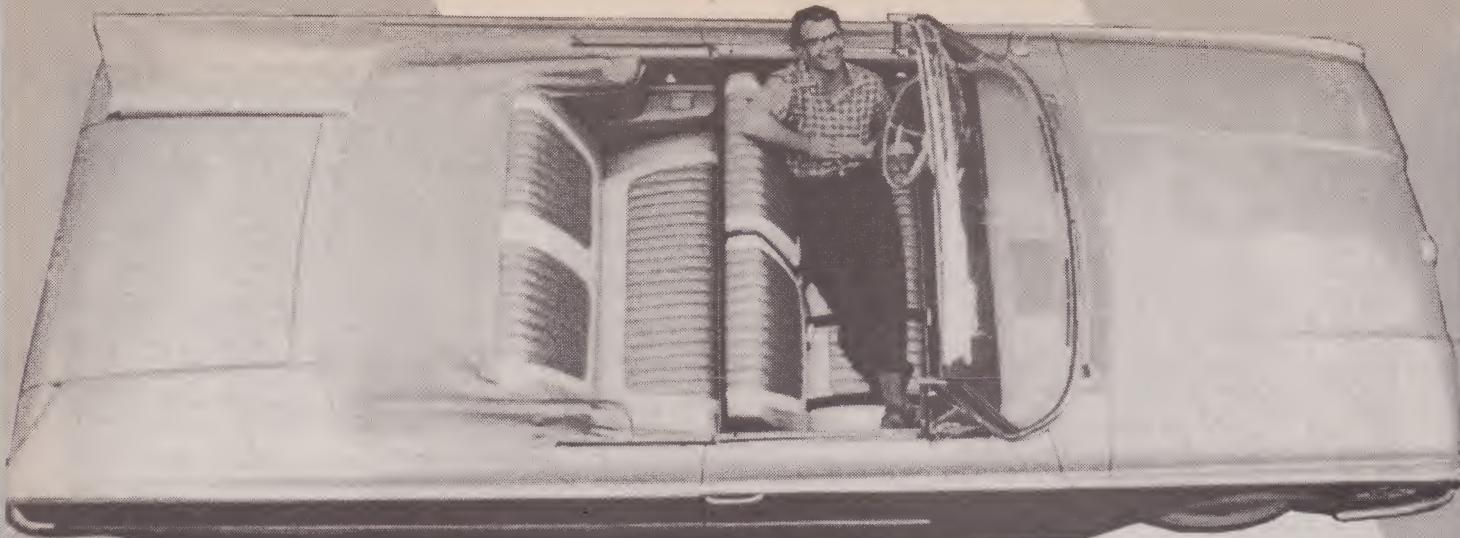
JOEY: Um, not necessarily—not that I know of, anyways. I'm sure there's plenty of people who think we're a racist band or something. Everybody always [infers] what they think is real; but I don't know of any big [inaccurate] thing that everybody's going, "Hey, The Briggs are this"—so, not that I know of. But I'm sure there's some things out there people think are true that aren't.

SKRATCH: When you guys started out, you had a different band name (I Decline). What was the reason for changing it?

JOEY: Another band owned that name. They had it trademarked, so they wanted us to pay 'em \$50,000 for it, so we said, "Stick it up your ass" and came up with a better name.

As you've just read, The Briggs are going to be busy out on the road for a while. Check www.the-briggs.org for all tour info and updates.





Beep Beep

By Zac

Beep Beep is the newest addition to the Saddle Creek family, and their newest release, **BUSINESS CASUAL**, is bound to make an impression on all of those who listen to it. They've got some catchy tunes—and even some you can dance and get your groove on to.

I had the pleasure of talking to Eric to really find out what Beep Beep is all about.

SKRATCH: First things first: what's your favorite kind of ice cream?

ERIC: Blue Bunny.

SKRATCH: What's your general definition of music?

ERIC: A good melody, a good beat, and singing from the heart.

SKRATCH: How did the members of Beep Beep come together?

ERIC: Chris and I were in the Marines together. We bought a couple guitars and one amp at the PX and started learning Hall and Oates covers. After our service, it became more serious. We got a Sunday-night slot at a local bar and began working in a few originals. Chris's first originals, "You're All I Need" and "Workin' to Survive", were so unique and powerful that I knew we were going to do pretty well.

SKRATCH: Can you explain where Beep Beep got its name?

ERIC: We worked some scat into one of our early songs ("Every Color of

the Rainbow"), and I would use the sound "beep" a lot. It just seemed soulful. It got us a bit of attention, and the bar owner just started billing us as "The Beep Beeps" because he knew people would know who he was talking about. After thinking about it for a while, Chris and I came up with "Beep Beep."

SKRATCH: How does it feel to now be part of the Saddle Creek family?

ERIC: We just want to get our message out to the people, and it's great that we are able to get real quality CDs made and have a Web store! We tried recording in one of those karaoke studios where they did backing tracks while we played guitar and sang into a microphone live, but the CD-R we got at the end didn't sound too good. It just wasn't very soulful.

SKRATCH: Tell me how you feel about the recording process your recently-pressed **BUSINESS CASUAL**.

ERIC: We got a lot of help from the guy who worked with us, AJ Mogis. He gave us lots of pointers on how to get more out of our voices and helped us polish up our lyrics and guitar riffs. He has this great drum machine that sounds just like real drums. It's a Boss drum machine. He also played the bass guitar on the record, because he felt that it would complete the sound we were going for. We're really excited about having a professional recording.

SKRATCH: Can we expect to see you on tour anytime soon with some labelmates?

ERIC: We are playing with Broken Spindles in England and Germany for a few dates this August. Beginning in October we will tour the U.S., Canada, and Western Europe with The Faint.

SKRATCH: What is your favorite song, or perhaps the song you feel turned out best on **BUSINESS CASUAL**?

ERIC: "Hold On to Your Dreams" is the one that I'm most proud of. It's something my brother told me, and I believe

it's what got me where I am today.

SKRATCH: What bands or artists do you feel Beep Beep is most influenced by?

ERIC: We'll always be big Hall and Oates fans, but lately I've been influenced by a large percentage of contemporary country—Kenny Chesney, Keith Urban, Martina McBride, Lee Ann Womack, Deana Carter, Darryl Worley, Aaron Tippin, Toby Keith, Brad Paisley, Rascal Flatts, Brooks & Dunn.... It's just very vibrant music; it's full of life.

SKRATCH: What kind of equipment do you use?

ERIC: Live we still share the amp that we got at the PX. Chris got himself a new Austin with three pickups, and I use a Fernandes now with two pickups. The label got us one of those Boss drum machines I was talking about. We usually have the soundman put a little delay and reverb on our voices.

SKRATCH: What are some of your favorite things to do for fun?

ERIC: I like to take my dog out to the lake on the weekends and throw the Frisbee around for him. Chris and I usually see movies together or go to the gym during the week. Chris likes reading non-fiction and collects militaria from the Second Indochina War. He also enjoys frequenting auctions, estate sales, and antique stores.

SKRATCH: What do you think is the best thing about being in a band?

ERIC: Having a creative outlet and being able to express oneself artistically. I also enjoy meeting new people and seeing new places.

SKRATCH: If you could choose how you're going to die, how would it happen, and when?

ERIC: I think Chris and I would like to die together while we were sleeping.

SKRATCH: If you could date any celebrity, who would it be? I'd choose Kirsten Dunst. Woo-yeah!

ERIC: We both love James Spader! When he was on **THE PRACTICE**, we swore he was speaking directly to us.

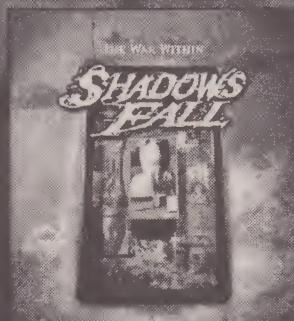
Look for Beep Beep on a full U.S. tour with labelmates The Faint this fall. Head over to <http://www.saddlecreekrecords.com> for all the Beep Beep fun you can imagine. You can also check out for more information on Beep Beep, including a biography and audio clips.

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HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS:
By Don Sill

Dayton, OH, may not be known for its thriving hardcore scene, but all that may change with bands such as 12 Tribes and Hawthorne Heights breaking into the game and stamping Dayton on the rock 'n' roll map. Hawthorne Heights, the latest band signed to Victory Records, is a post-hardcore band in the vein of Thursday and Thrice, with a cross-breeding of discordance and melody with guttural growls and layered, sweet-sounding vocals—a combination which brings a new and imaginative depth to the genre. Their

debut album, *THE SILENCE IN BLACK AND WHITE*, contains songs of frustration, personal growth, and evolution. Musically, it tests the limitations of the post-hardcore and screamo styles, adding deeper and darker subtleties for a thicker texture. Guitarist Casey Calvert gave SKRATCH a call from Austin, TX, while on their first national tour with labelmates Silverstein.

SKRATCH: You guys are out on tour now with Silverstein and Alexisonfire. How's that going?

CALVERT: Oh, man, it's going great.

SKRATCH: Is this the first big tour you guys have been on?

CALVERT: Yeah, it is. We've really only been on, like, two tours before—and our last tour was awful.

SKRATCH: What happened on the last tour?

CALVERT: It was just booked really poorly, and the headliner dropped off like five days into it. This is really amazing compared to that.

SKRATCH: Good, so you're finally getting a good experience on the road.

CALVERT: Oh yeah, it's great so far.

SKRATCH: Being that you're basically a rookie on tour, how are you finding life on the road?

CALVERT: Well, it's kind of tough at first, but then you kind of get used to it, I guess. All I really care about is if I can shower.

SKRATCH: How often is that?

CALVERT: Whenever we get to a hotel or someone's house or whatever. Being on the road is pretty awesome,



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actually. This is our first time out, and we're having a blast.

SKRATCH: Big difference from Dayton.

CALVERT: Oh yeah.

SKRATCH: What's the music scene like in Dayton?

CALVERT: It used to be a lot bigger, but it's been going downhill a lot.

SKRATCH: What was the secret to getting yourselves out of Dayton?

SKRATCH: It must be a breath of fresh air, seeing all of this.

CALVERT: Yeah [...]. Dayton is more of a rock scene, [which is] not much like what we are, and not that everyone is doing what we do. They're more garage rock, I guess.

SKRATCH: It must've been hard to stick to your guns when everyone in your town is into the garage rock thing, while you're this post-hardcore band. Was there ever a

they're a hardcore band called 12 Tribes, and they're our friends. It's pretty awesome.

SKRATCH: Dayton rocks! You guys put Dayton on the map.

CALVERT: Yeah, it's really cool.

something, where it's really huge and then just bottoms out. Hopefully it just... it's weird, because when we just started out, we thought it was the best time for us to do this, and now it's crazy.

SKRATCH: If Hawthorne Heights had to be defined by one song on this album, which one would it be?

CALVERT: Well, my favorite is "Blue Burns Orange", but we haven't even

"IT'S WEIRD, BECAUSE WHEN WE JUST STARTED OUT, WE THOUGHT IT WAS THE BEST TIME FOR US TO DO THIS, AND NOW IT'S CRAZY."

CALVERT: Just a lot of work, like the Internet promotions and stuff. Before we got signed, we really worked our asses off. We sent out tons of demos, and we were writing songs non-stop and all that kind of stuff. We just got lucky, I guess.

SKRATCH: What was the hotspot for you guys to play in Dayton?

CALVERT: The only places for all-ages shows were, like, the Knights of Columbus halls and places like that; but they don't really even do many shows there anymore, either. It's kind of nice to get away from that and being around all of these huge shows and see all these cities with way bigger scenes than Dayton's.

time where you second-guessed yourselves?

CALVERT: Well, I would never do that, because I don't even listen to that type of stuff. What we play is literally all I listen to. That's how I am. [...]

SKRATCH: What kept you focused and driven?

CALVERT: Honestly, [playing our music] is the only thing I really like to do.

SKRATCH: You guys must be the shit in Dayton, like, "Yeah, Casey and the boys got out of here. Lucky bastards."

CALVERT: [Laughs] Yeah, a lot of people do say that. There's another band that got signed to Ferret,

CALVERT: What we tried to do was not be a straight hardcore band and not be a straight pop-punk band, you know? We just wanted to mix it up. Now there's a lot of bands doing that already, and they're way more popular. I mean, we got out poppy elements, but they're not too poppy, you know? It's just cool to mix it up like that... even though a lot of people make fun of that, like in a lot of reviews I read and stuff.

SKRATCH: Are you concerned that emo is getting too big too fast and that it may peak before its time?

CALVERT: It is a slight concern. I think at this time it's the new alternative. I'm hoping it's not like ska or

played that live yet. It's hard to tell, man. That's a hard question.

SKRATCH: You have got to be stoked right now. You guys are right on the brink of big things.

CALVERT: Hopefully. [Laughs] I don't want to jinx myself. I just want to be on tour all the time and actually make a living at this. It's not about money or fame, it's just I want to do with my life.

Debut solo album from
MILLENCOLIN's
vocalist
NIKOLA SARCEVIC!

SARCEVIC

LOCK-SPORT-KROCK

hellogoodbye

HELLOGOODBYE
By Tiffany Chow

It's hard to argue with fun, especially in HelloGoodbye's case. Forrest Kline (vocals/guitar), Jesse Kurvink (keys), Marcus Cole (bass), and Chris Profeta (drums) are the four young Huntington Beach natives who make up the synthetic pop force known as HelloGoodbye. Their success of late—namely, the deal they recently signed with Drive-Thru Records—was not earned because of intense focus or determined drive, but rather solely to the happy-go-lucky attitude of the band and maybe some talent.

Just to give you an idea of just how spontaneously fun the band is, they insisted on conducting the interview in a random apartment complex's spa late at night. This outlook may seem unconventional to most, shocking to some, and downright outrageous to a few but for HG, it means a sure path to enjoyable success.

SKRATCH: How did HelloGoodbye begin?

FORREST: I started making some songs in my room on my computer. I had some buddies who liked the songs and thought I should start a band with them. I met Jesse long before then, in high school.

JESSE: We actually met in middle school. We had computer class together. We sat next to each other.

F: We didn't meet in middle school; he was some dork in my class in middle school. We MET in high school, when he had blossomed into a beautiful young man. Then, I met Marcus through Jesse.

SKRATCH: What was the ultimate goal from the start?

J: To be in SKRATCH MAGAZINE. [Everybody laughs]

F: We never had a goal at all.

MARCUS: We liked having fun.

F: Everything just happened. We never set out to do anything at all ever.

J: Is this going to lead into the "How you hooked up with Drive-Thru" question?

SKRATCH: No, that's later. [Laughs]

J: Okay, we'll be waiting for it!

F: You got to have a smooth transition.

SKRATCH: Why do you think the band stayed together?

J: For a long time, we all just loved playing music and shows. I think one of the best ways to keep a band successful is when you don't go into it with such a serious mindset and you're just friends having a good time.

SKRATCH: Since your approach to the band is somewhat un-serious, how do you approach it now that it's more of a business?

F: Basically, HelloGoodbye was really all I ever did even when it wasn't really showing any results. Now

it's still all I really do!

J: We do have to take it more seriously. It is like a job: you have to work with other people, you have deadlines (obviously), meetings [A helicopter flies overhead] We constantly have paparazzi helicopters flying over us when we're in the Jacuzzi. I mean, that's strange. [Everybody laughs]

F: There's never really anything in the band that we don't want to do. Everything about being in a band is fun. We're all really excited to tour and see the country. I love making music and recording and everything else that comes along with it. It's a good time.

M: Plus, the chicks are great. [Everybody laughs]

SKRATCH: It's pretty clear in the music and at the shows that you're not really in the band for the fame and riches—and then you signed to Drive-Thru. Do you have any concern about not being taken seriously?

F: When we first signed to Drive-Thru, I constantly heard about previous fans who were disappointed. I've never had that [sell-out] mindset about a band ever in my whole life.

J: That's what's so weird about it. We never set out to do anything spectacular with this. All the stuff that happened just happened. We never changed our sound, we never shopped demos, we never tried to make ourselves look good. Immediately when you sign, people are like, "Oh, they're selling out, they're changing their sound just to fit in with a label." But we're doing the same stupid stuff we've been doing for three years. Now we can just do more with it.

M: Like [that one fan] We should make a milk carton: "Have you seen this boy?"

F: This one kid from Pasadena was always at our shows. Since we signed to Drive-Thru, I haven't seen him.

J: He IMed me!

F: Was he disappointed?

J: He said he thought we changed our sound [Sarcastically] because we have screaming now. It IS the same songs we've been playing [all along]. I think no matter what you do, what band you are, what label you sign to, people are always going to try to find something wrong with it. You just have to learn to let it roll off your back.

SKRATCH: You said you didn't shop demos around, so how did the whole signing to Drive-Thru come about?

J: My fianc co-owns the label

F: Which is funny, because his girlfriend works publicity [there].

J: Which is funny, because my boyfriend on the side is actually in retail

F: So he's all over the place on the staff.

J: When they say they run it like a family, they really RUN it like a family.

M: They run it IN the family.

F: It's an inbred, weird family.

M: But a family nonetheless.

[Laughing] Forrest, you want to take this one?

F:

When I was 16, I did the graphic and Web design [there]. I worked on and off for a couple years, so I knew them really well. One day, they happened to hear our demos through a mutual business friend. I got a call and figured they wanted me to do some design, but they were interested in HelloGoodbye. I hadn't sent any demos out, so I was like, "Wow! That's crazy." J: [Sarcastically] And if you believe all the stuff you read, we got on the label because we're friends with them and date people on the label, and, you know, like, it's totally true.

SKRATCH: So how did it feel?

F: Awesome.

J: I don't think there's any other word to describe it. After you talk to Drive-Thru and you meet all those people, it just makes all the other music-industry people you meet seem lame and fake.

F: We're just really good friends with them. They're really funny and fun to hang out with.

J: You don't have to worry about meetings, it's just hanging out. They're really good at what they do and they know how to handle business, but at the same time, they keep it really comfortable and [maintain] amazing relationships with all their bands.

SKRATCH: Signing to a label like Drive-Thru definitely leads to major, nationwide tours. Is this something that HG looks forward to?

F: We are so excited beyond belief.

J: As [he] mentioned before, Maybe you didn't catch that, Tiff!

M: Wow. Jerk. [Everybody laughs]

F: We've never toured really.

J: I've never been anywhere that doesn't border California.

F: [That goes for] me, as well; but everywhere I have gone, I've loved. And when we did go to Arizona a few times, [it was] a blast.

J: I think that what Forrest always says is really true: it's kind of the ideal way to see the country, especially at this age. You're playing shows every night—which is obviously a blast-plus, you're instantly hooked up to this social scene, where you're meeting kids that are like you; and you're with good friends.

SKRATCH: So there's already plans?

F: I guess since Motion City posted it on their



Website, we're allowed to say it. The only thing we have set up so far is a short West Coast tour with Motion City Soundtrack and Limbeck-which will be amazing, because I love Limbeck. J: They've been some of our best friends since we were starting out.

F: Well, I don't know if they would say [that]. [Laughs] And Motion City Soundtrack is awesome. And we also have a short, five-day thing from here to Texas with a band called Peachcake.

I'm excited to do that, because once we get to Texas, we're going to head down to [this] hospital in Houston. I read about it online. It was built on top of a graveyard, and they built the basement above ground so as not to disturb the bodies that lie below. [It was first used] in the 1550s to bury plague victims. The basement is the crematorium, and it's got this spiral staircase that you walk down, and it's pitch black.

J: So! We're going to Texas, and that should be fun. [Laughs]

F: So if anyone out there reading knows about other haunted, abandoned, creepy places that we can check out in your town when we go on tour, we're very interested!

We never set out to do anything spectacular with this. All the stuff that happened just happened.

SKRATCH: Forrest, you did all of the engineering for the EP. Why?

F: I love recording. It's something that I'd be interested in pursuing later on. [For] the full-length, we might work with someone else, but I do love doing it. For the EP, [Drive-Thru] just wanted to release the demos, because everyone likes [them] better, but I wanted to re-record.

J: My mom says the new versions sound better. F: Anyone out there that has a beef with the new versions, take it up with Jesse's mom. You're not going to argue with Jesse's mom.

SKRATCH: You recently lost your old drummer, Aaron. Can you explain a bit why?

F: He's in school, and he wants to be a teacher.

J: He also wants to do missionary work.

M: He doesn't like traveling.

J: Yeah, he's been in a billion other bands in his life, and really isn't that fond of touring. He didn't want to be a touring band. We're all so excited, and it's the least thing he wants to do. And he's really dedicated to school-which is great.

F: And his hometown girlfriend. He just wasn't into leaving.

SKRATCH: I know you had a lot of people respond to the need for a new drummer. Why Chris Profeta?

J: Chris was the least attractive drummer that we tried out-and therefore the least competition for babes on the road. [Laughs]

CHRIS: I think [it was] my availability and my dedication.

F: Your dad said you have great timing, too.

C: Yeah, and my dad thinks I'm really good, so he told them what was up.

J: It's weird. Chris was the first person we auditioned. He also lived closer than anybody else. We had people come in from across the country!

SKRATCH: What are some things about HG that set you apart from any other band at the moment?

J: Joey, who is always with us, sells our merch, and does everything. I think that sets us aside from anybody else-I mean, 'cause YOU try having a guy like Joey. I like to think we're at least a little different. I know I always have a hard time [describing] what [we] sound like-and I think that's a good thing.

F: I think just the way it functions and the way it comes together. The songs just came with no goal in mind. We didn't search AOL profiles trying to find guys to start a band with and get signed and stuff.

J: We don't have tattoos or dyed hair.

M: Chris has dyed hair.

J: He's the new guy-he doesn't count. [Everybody laughs]

SKRATCH: How do you go about writing your songs?

J: They're based on girls. [Laughs]

F: Well, if you've heard our songs, you'd see that they don't stray from the typical theme of love too much. They're all about my current girlfriend, Chelsea! [Everybody laughs]

J: I love bands that are capable of telling stories, and I also think it's awesome when bands with political agendas find ways to express that through music; but we're not like that at all: we write songs about girls.

SKRATCH: I think that HG owes a lot of its success to its amazingly strong group of supporters. If you could only say one more thing to them, what would you say?

F: When all of our friends are at our shows like that, it's the funniest thing.

J: I think it's representative of us. It just makes everything more fun.

F: What are we going to do on tour without our entourage?

M: We'll get a fleet of vans, one for the band and four vanloads of our friends.

JOEY: Escalades!

SKRATCH: So what would your last words be to them?

F: This girl Tiffany's totally easy. All you guys should totally go for her, tiffany@skratchmag.com or something. THE END. [Laughs]

J: [I'd say] thank you.

Check out the band and its irresistible brand of pop on a few tours this early summer. Find those dates and other fantastic fun on the Website www.hellogoodbye.net



Limitpoint
By Mabel Lam

I'll tell you what's equally as hot and fresh as a Chipotle burrito: Limitpoint's latest album, *WISHES OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS*. Like their favorite snack, this album features the same delicious pop nature found in their first EP, *WE CALL THIS LIFE*. However, this four-piece band formed overnight that started out as mere pop rock five years ago, have now evolved into a steadier status of rock with their new record and the addition of their two newest members in the early summer of 2003. Back then, they probably did not expect such a whirlwind tour life as they have now. Immediately following their May / June national tour and this year's Warped Tour is their CD release tour July / August 2004.

I got a chance to talk to the members of Limitpoint via e-mail on the beginning of their CD release tour, right before they embarked on their show in Reno.

SKRATCH: Is there a better way to kick off your summer tour than with a CD Release party?

MIKEY: Yeah, by getting out there and touring on it. We're actually in the van RIGHT NOW on the way to the Sacramento Warped Tour to sell records and hang out. I love the Warped Tour! Tomorrow (July 8th), we start our tour off in good ol' Livermore, California.

SHAW: This is our RECORD RELEASE TOUR. It's more like a CD release party in every city.

MIKEY: Yeah...we're excited to go cross country again...it's our fifth national tour in about six months! Wow...that's actually a lot of driving now that I think about it, haha. We haven't stopped touring since Warped Tour 2002, but not as crazy as we've been touring lately. It's so much fun!

SKRATCH: What's the craziest thing you guys or a fan have done to promote Limitpoint?

SHAW: Two straight days of driving from New York City to the Warped Tour kick off party in Houston, Texas to sell our records on the day of its release on June 25th! That was crazy!

MIKEY: We've got tons of great fans and friends that promote us everyday in their cities. They're beyond street-team members...they're amazing! One of our friends goes to Pepsi Smash in L.A. every week to pass out flyers and get our shirts on TV, our friend Julie from THE REAL WORLD risked her neck to throw on one of our shirts on THE GAUNTLET CHALLENGE on MTV. Plus our good friends in Hurry Up Offense sported Limitpoint hats and shirts at their house band performance for Carson Daly this year. THANKS YOU GUYS!

SKRATCH: The last album you released was *WE CALL THIS LIFE*, in 2002. Now that it's been two years, how have you guys evolved in the studio?

MIKEY: A lot of changes, for the better, were made in and out of the studio during the past year. First of all, we changed our lineup a little and gained two amazing new friends Eric (drums) and Brooke (guitar). That was our biggest and best change. Secondly, we entered the studio with an incredible new producer named Mike Green (of The Matches, Over It, Yellowcard). He evolved our sound with our new music along with the new guys. I'm so proud of the new record...and I love our lineup. The music and members mean a lot to me.

SKRATCH: Which song best encompasses the purpose or the title, *WISHES OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS*?

SHAW: Lyrically, I'd say "Imagination".

ERIC: Yeah, "Imagination". There's a poem in the bridge that explains the overall concept of the title.

BROOKE: It's all about dreams...I thought about the name after thinkin' about what this record is about as a whole.

MIKEY: Dreams accomplished, dreams crushed, dreaming of the future and nightmares...there's a lot of focus on that. Lyrically I wrote all the songs in the vein of dreaming. It's something I've been kinda obsessing about lately.

SKRATCH: I must say that I totally dig Shepard Fairey, and his artwork on *WISHES OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS*. Why did you guys choose him?

MIKEY: 'Cause I think he's the most amazing graphic artist I've ever seen. Honestly, I've been a HUGE fan of Shepard's for a long time now. I wanted to be completely proud of this album in every way. He took an interest in our music and starting hooking us up with promotional materials to promote them and us. I asked him if he'd do the cover and the CD art and he said YES! At first, I couldn't believe it, but he's a really great person and his staff is equally cool, and they've all been very supportive of Limitpoint. I know it sounds really cheesy but it's a dream come true to have Obey be such a big part of our band. We've been very lucky to have so many amazing sponsors helping the band with food, clothes and promotion for tour. LIMITPOINT L O V E S

OBEY & SKULL CLOTHING & ESPECIALLY CHIPOTLE RESTAURANTS!!!! Sooo goooooood.

SKRATCH: To me, the Obey Giant figure always reminded me of Big Brother for some reason. What does he represent to you guys?

BROOKE: To me, it's an underground movement. I think your assumption of it is exactly why it's so big today...it makes you question it, you know?

SHAW: Good choice of words...

MIKEY: Read www.obeygiant.com. It's pretty amazing how every art piece at his gallery showings, his stickers, posters and their clothing—which we can't get enough of—has the slogan on it. You should really read it! The thought behind his campaign is pretty awesome!

SKRATCH: Going back to the subject of touring—if you guys get fed up with each other is there just an explosion of testosterone?

MIKEY: There are arguments sometimes. This past seven months after our record was recorded, we've been touring almost straight through. It's a lot of time on the road. Of course sometimes you get into small fights about things, but one of the things about Limitpoint, and the reason why we can tour so much, is because we: 1) Love the road. 2) Think of each other like family (and you know how family fights can get, hehe). But, they all work out for the better in the end. Pretty cheesy, huh?

SKRATCH: Who can (or will) go the longest without taking a shower?

BROOKE: Shaw and Eric are tied right now for rarely taking showers on tour.

MIKEY: Haha, yeah. By the time you read this, it'll probably have been about three to six days since Eric or Shaw has showered. Ewww!

SHAW: Yeah, actually Mikey makes up for our showers since cleans himself many times a day!

SKRATCH: Alright, enough of manliness. Tell all the ladies out there your astrological sign and quote the most romantic movie line you know of.

MIKEY: I'm a Cancer, and damn...I don't know what my quote would be. Hmmm, how about, "You had me at hello." That was such a rad scene.

BROOKE: Gemini, and here's my quotes: "Let's get naked and start the REVOLUTION!" or "Everything I've ever done has been for you!"

SHAW: I'm a Leo..."It was a run by fruiting."

ERIC: Capricorn, and I don't watch too many movies.

SKRATCH: Haha, I only recognize Mikey's quote from JERRY MAGUIRE. Shaw's quote is from MRS. DOUBTFIRE!

Get their latest record off of www.smartpunk.com, and check out www.limitpoint.net for all tour dates!



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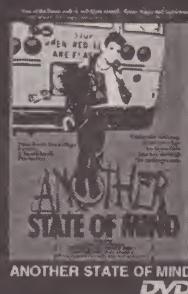


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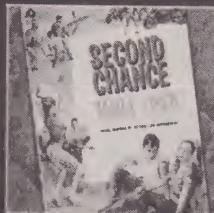
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PLAY PRETTY FOR BABY

PLAY PRETTY FOR BABY
Interview by Jeff Penalty

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, CHIEF! I know you're about to flip the page to read some other interview, but FIRST I need to introduce you to the best thing to come out of Orange County since...um...oranges! Play Pretty for Baby rocks so fucking hard that you won't even believe it when you see them. They're intense, explosive, and, above all, unique. If you're in a band that sucks, you'd be wise to start copying them A.S.A.P. SKRATCH readers, meet Play Pretty for Baby. I know you guys are gonna get along great.

Below is my e-mail interview with lead singer Jim Belisle, guitarist Sean Garcia, and bassist Ben Collett.

SKRATCH: You guys go pretty nuts on stage. Have you ever hurt yourselves?

JIM: Nothing really more than a head stock to the Ulner's nerve (funny bone)—and getting hit there really isn't that funny. I pulled some muscles in my back a few years ago and had to go to the doctor. Now that I no longer have insurance, I stretch out before we play.

SEAN: Well, I know I've clocked both Jim and Ben in the head or face or whatever with my guitar. It happens on a regular basis. I've also taken a face full of Ben's bass a few times. One time I was hit hard enough that I broke off one of his tuning keys (with my face) and I started bleeding profusely. It always seems like a bigger deal than it really is, though.

BEN: We haven't hurt ourselves as much as we've hurt our instruments—but they deserved it. That fucking bass was asking for it.

SKRATCH: I hate it when interviewers ask this, but I have the hardest time describing your sound...so how do you guys describe it?

SEAN: The best way I can think of to describe our sound is that we sound like Refused meet At The Drive-In on a D.C.-inspired label...something like

JIM: I hate to say that we are post-punk or post-hardcore or this or that. I use the generic "aggressive rock" tagline, or "aggressive rock that in an odd way you can dance to."

BEN: It sounds like John Reis and Ian MacKaye making sweet love to each other. [We're influenced by] D.C. stuff like Fugazi, Rites of Spring, and (obviously) Nation of Ulysses. Also, [the] San Diego scene (Drive Like Jehu, Clikatat Ikatowi, Hot Snakes). Maybe a little Minutemen, too.

SKRATCH: You have a song called "Presidents' Day" on your new EP. What is it about? Do you consider yourselves a political band and/or political people?

JIM: The song itself isn't about a particular "president" per se, but the subject matter is sort of broad, in the sense that we've been fucking with Central America for years, and now we are fucking with the Middle East (as I guess we have been doing for years, as well). Honestly, I wouldn't consider us a political band. Maybe [we're] politically-minded—or, at the very least, making an effort to be politically aware.

BEN: We are all politically-minded. Amongst ourselves we discuss and complain about the current administration. As far as our live

show and lyrical content, we strive to be aware but not preachy. The only thing we preach wholeheartedly is for everyone to register and VOTE!

SEAN: The one where she is supposed to be a modern day Cinderella? Yeah, it looks pretty crappy. **JIM:** I hate when these young artists spread themselves so thin. Between the music, TV, movies, clothing lines.... Damn it, Hilary, stick to one craft, perfect it, then move on.

SKRATCH: What's the worst thing that's ever happened to you at a show you've played (in this or a previous band)?

BEN: In my old band, on our final tour, my singer's drinking was at [its] worst. We were playing at a skate park in rural Minnesota. At that time, skate parks were hard to come by, so I knew that the kids had to fight hard to get that one opened. Clearly marked all throughout the park were signs that said "Absolutely no drugs or alcohol." During the show, he drank beer on the stage (which was a half-pipe) and asked a 15-year-old girl if she was a lesbian. That shit was totally embarrassing and could've gotten the park shut down. I quit the band after that tour.

SKRATCH: What would you do if you got drafted?

JIM: Speaking as an honorably-discharged army veteran, if I got a draft-card notice today for the mess that we are currently in, I'd go into hiding tomorrow. It is not like this is the War of 1812 and we are under attack here.

BEN: I'm not of draft age, but if I were, I would find a way to get out of it. Call me un-American, but lately our military has gone from defense to an unnecessary offense. The president has abused the power of our military for reasons not of safety but blatant profit. Our poor men and women in the armed forces are caught in the middle of this bullshit and are dying for no genuine reason.

SEAN: I'd probably go. [...] I wouldn't mind getting shot or killed. I really don't want to grow up to have a mortgage to worry about, anyways.

SKRATCH: Do you think it's safe for me to eat that old chicken that's in my freezer? It's from December, but it's been frozen the whole time. Ryan says it should be okay, but I don't know.

BEN: If you were a vegetarian, you wouldn't have this dilemma.

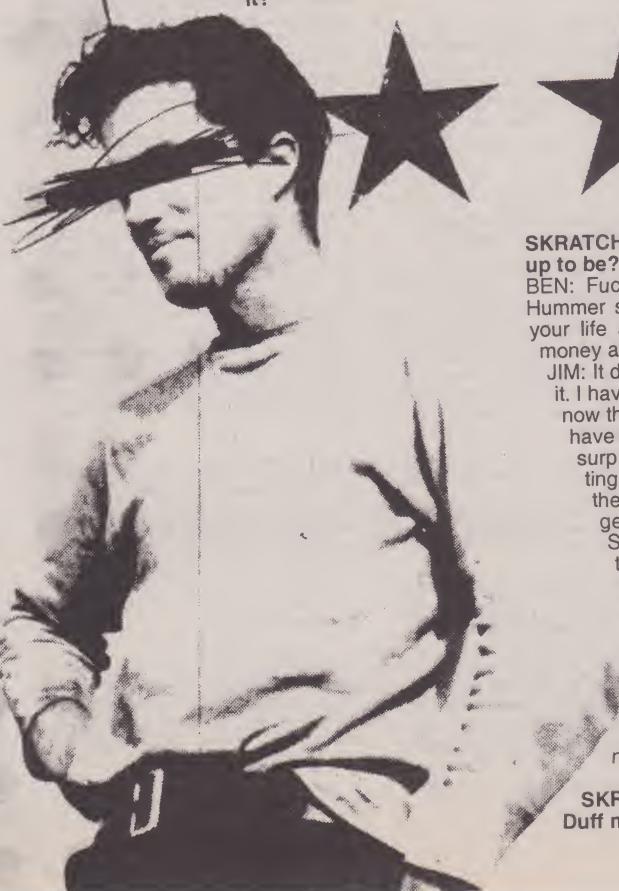
SEAN: If you bake it in the oven, it should be fine; but if it smells funny when you defrost it, throw it out—or duct tape it under your neighbor's car for laughs.

JIM: As long as it has been frozen the entire time, you will be fine. Now, freezer burn, that is another story!

SEAN: Yes and no. It's a lot more work than it should be. And kissing ass and trying to make connections with people who you despise [but] who hold the future of your musical career in the palm of their hands is a humbling, if not an embarrassing and degrading folks, do whatever you can to catch Play Pretty for Baby's next show. You'll want to be doing something you believe in and making progress—even if it's little to none.

Another story that will have to wait for another time, I'm afraid. Our time is up here—but your time as a Play Pretty for Baby fan is just beginning! Seriously, The Agency Records (), and check out for mp3s and upcoming shows. Now consider yourself in the know.

SKRATCH: Don't you think that new Hilary Duff movie looks kinda stupid?



Silent Drive

Silent Drive
Interview by Melissa Wong

Be honest: how often do side projects really prosper, anyway? Well, I'll tell you one thing: good music is honest. No matter how much promotion and publicity may help, if the music is amazing, it'll speak for itself. When I first opened the CD case of Silent Drive's *LOVE IS WORTH IT*, I had no idea what to expect. I put it on, and I've been astoundingly speechless ever since.

Silent Drive began as a side project between Pete Chilton and Zach Jordan (from Bane), Nick Van Someren, and Dave Joyal. The band released its debut record on Equal Vision Records in May called *LOVE IS WORTH IT*. The guys had been playing and writing music together for about two years, and January of this year was when it all began to take off. SD did the EVR tour this past spring, toured Japan in April, and are doing a short East Coast tour in June.

I spoke with bassist Pete Chilton about graphic design, marriage, and the importance of "doing your own thing."

SKRATCH: Where is everyone from? Where is the band itself from?

CHILTON: Nick, Zach, and I are from Worcester, MA. Dave is from Burlington, VT. The band is pretty much from Worcester.

SKRATCH: Tell me about the tour in Japan. Crazy fans? Weather? What's the scene like?

CHILTON: It was really good. We recorded a demo and released it as an EP out there, and it sold a lot, so when we got out there, a bunch of kids already knew about us.

SKRATCH: Your debut album, *LOVE IS WORTH IT*, was released on Equal Vision Records in May. What was it like working with Jason Livermore and Bill Stevenson?

CHILTON: It was pretty amazing. From being in Bane, we'd had some professional recordings, but this was so much more professional than...ever? [Laughs]

mean, I guess [it was] more professional, as in attention to detail. There were two studios in the same building where we worked on drum tracks, and then moved over to do vocals at the other studio at the same time. Meeting and working with Bill and Jason was awesome. Bill's done so much throughout his life, [having been] in so many influential bands...It was pretty insane. And he's funny.

SKRATCH: I really like "Banana Rejection" and "Rooftops". Do you have a favorite track off the new album? **CHILTON:** Well, I really like the first two songs, "4/16" and "American Classic". We were still writing "4/16" while we were in the studio, so it's the newest song on there. And "American Classic" was the very first song we played at our first practice. They're kind of like bookends of this...

SKRATCH: New project? [Laughs] **CHILTON:** [Laughs] Right.

SKRATCH: What's in your CD player? **CHILTON:** Well, I have the newest record from Lucero. They're this alternative country band. The lead singer's voice reminds me of Kurt Cobain, and they have kind of sad, acoustic-y songs. That would be the newest item I've acquired.

SKRATCH: Who or what are some of your influences in songwriting?

CHILTON: Well, this record was kind of like everyone's diverse influences (for each different genre that we each love) combined. There's sooo many that I can't even begin to name them. But I think that's why this band is so interesting. [We have] like at least 1,000 influences—which is the point of the band. [Pause] I guess that's the cop-out answer, huh? [Laughs]

SKRATCH: [Laughs] It's okay. What is the best album (or albums) ever?

CHILTON: Oh, man. Radiohead, *Faith No More*, lots of hardcore stuff we grew up with, and any rock in general, like *Jimmy Eat World*...At the Drive-In. Um, I don't know, I'm a huge Radiohead fan. [Laughs] There's way too many [bands to list].

SKRATCH: What was the last live show you attended that you didn't play? **CHILTON:** [Laughs] Wow. Let me see.... Actually, you know what? This is a

good time to ask me. I just went to see The Howl at a show in Worcester. I think these guys are going to be very big. It's comprised of a lot of younger guys ([i.e.,] kids my age) from old-school blues bands. My cousin is actually the guitar player from The Fabulous Thunderbirds, but he quit that to start The Howl. I think they'll go far.

SKRATCH: Are you reading any books or magazines?

CHILTON: I recently picked up a Ray Bradbury book. It was my first attempt to read in a long time. And we're in the van a lot, so we read lots of magazines, like *ROLLING STONE*, *MAXIM*—you know, all those guy magazines. Last month it was like *MAXIM*'s "100 Most Beautiful Women" issue or something. So, yeah, those magazines are always lying around.

SKRATCH: How old is everyone? Are you married? Do you have families?

CHILTON: Zach and I are 27, Nick is 24, and Dave is 20. As far as families, I get married in August, and Zach got married in June. I have my fiancée and my dog. Does that count as family? [Laughs]

SKRATCH: [Laughs] Of course. Congratulations! That's awesome.

CHILTON: [Laughs] Thanks.

SKRATCH: What will SD be doing for the rest of 2004?

CHILTON: In July we will be touring, and then we take a week off. Then Bane does a week of touring, and then I get married. In September, Bane will be recording in the studio. I mean, for the most part, our whole year has already been mapped out.

SKRATCH: Do you work outside of the band?

CHILTON: Yeah, actually: I do freelance design. I did the artwork for CD cover and the liner notes.

SKRATCH: It's very pretty. When I saw it, I was like, "Oh my god, this is beautiful!" So, good job! [Laughs]

CHILTON: [Laughs] Thank you very much. Yeah, I actually worked at an advertising agency for three years. But for about eight months now, I've been doing freelance. I ended up quitting because I had so much to do with the bands. I mean, Silent Drive doesn't make any money 'cause it's brand new, and Bane is

doing okay. But between Bane and working a lot when I'm home, it gets the bills paid.

SKRATCH: What do you look forward to for the band's future?

CHILTON: Ah, the band's future. Hmmm.

SKRATCH: Where would you like to be in five years?

CHILTON: It would be nice to be able to just do the bands. Not that I don't like doing design, but I would like to play music professionally. [...] I think that at some point I'll be able to live off the band/bands, but who knows? I think that I've come far enough where there's no turning back, you know what I mean?

SKRATCH: Yeah: at the point where you've found the industry you belong to and all you have to do is let it happen.

CHILTON: Yeah, like that. If you get to the level where I'm at and you know a lot of people and all that [...] crap, [...] you're bound to be doing something within that area, like working for a record label doing graphic design or just something in the music scene.

SKRATCH: What advice would you recommend to new bands?

CHILTON: The most important thing is to do your own thing. A lot of bands will try to sound like someone else...and that's what ultimately fails them. I mean, sometimes the stuff you write and play may not sound like the sound you'd like it to be or imagine it to be, but write exactly what you feel and it doesn't matter what it sounds like, because that's what you are, and it shouldn't sound like someone else.

SKRATCH: What is the most rewarding part of being a musician?

CHILTON: I've always liked working hard. I find that working hard pays off; it really does. It pays off in a way that I get to see the world. I've been to, like, 18 countries just from touring. It's been so rewarding to create something and have it take you places.

Thanks so much for taking the time to talk to me, Pete. Congrats on both weddings, and I can't wait to come out to one of SD's shows. To check out some MP3s and show dates, visit <http://www.silentdrive.net>.

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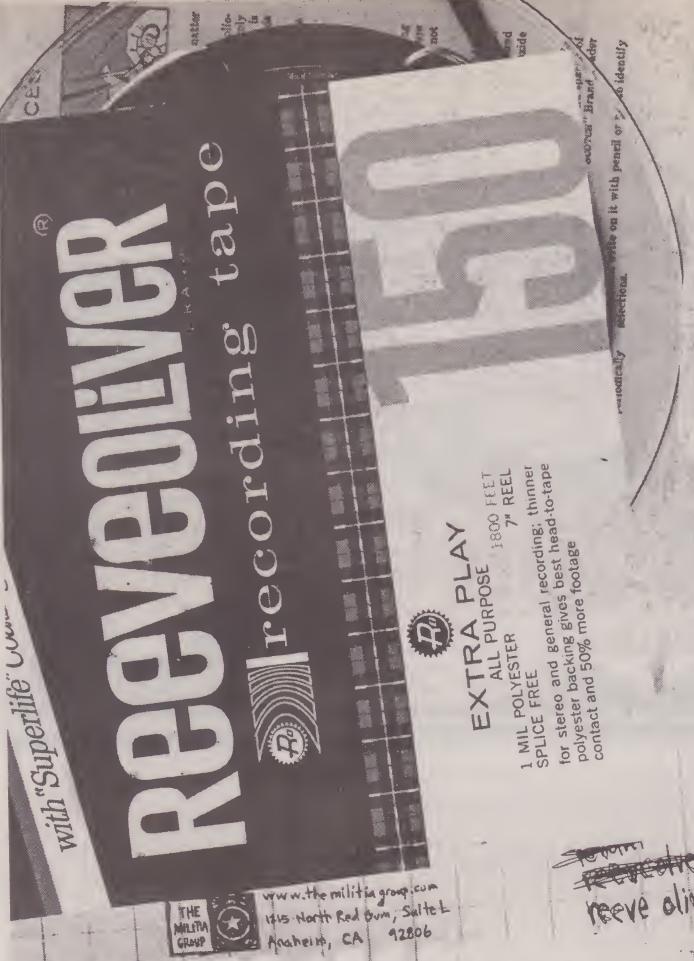
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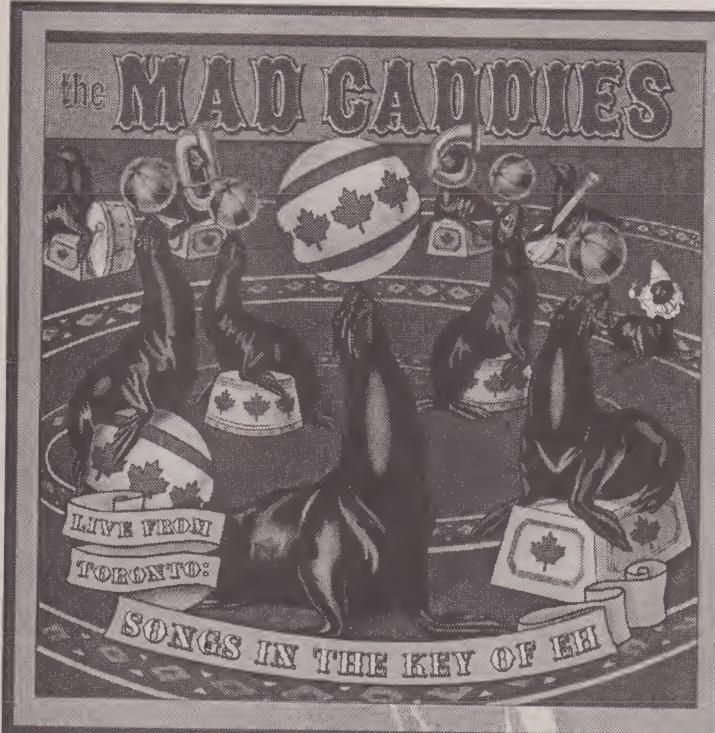
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SHOW REVIEWS

Piebald The Jealous Sound Northstar

June 16, 2004
@ Chain Reaction (Anaheim, CA)
By Jessica Rihal

Once I made my way through the half-full venue and forked out two bucks for a generic orange slurpee, I realized that I had already missed the first band, Down to Earth Approach. Sorry, guys. I'm sure you rocked.

When I arrived, I was expecting to see a few mediocre bands before the main act, Piebald, so I was caught off guard when I arrived to see most of the young crowd engulfed in Northstar. Northstar is a band consisting of four talented young men who call Huntsville, AL, home. They play a poppy, upbeat rock that will be sure to satisfy anyone's harmonious cravings. Northstar played a tight set unfazed by the lack of audience participation. The fact that the audience was even watching instead of outside smoking designer cloves was a miracle. Northstar played several songs off their sophomore release, **POLLYANNA** (on Triple Crown Records).

The Jealous Sound took the stage as more kids started to fill the small venue, raising the temperature at a steady rate. Standing towards the back of the crowd, I could see that this band had a few loyal fans singing along to every word and dancing in place. Hailing from Los Angeles, The Jealous Sound is what I call a CD band. They're great musicians and sound awesome on CD, but when you get to see them live, you can't help but be a little disappointed. They play very well live and everything sounds great, but they are boring. I wanted them to be good, I really did, but the truth is that they put me to sleep. Despite the relentless touring that TJS has done with a plethora of amazing bands, there is always something that is amiss when I see them perform. Regardless, check them out for yourself.

After what seemed like an eternity, Piebald finally graced the anxious crowd with their permeating presence. The first song was **Long Nights** off of their **WE ARE THE ONLY FRIENDS WE HAVE** full-length. As soon as the opening chords were played, the audience yelled out the lyrics **Long nights, hard times / Everything that makes you feel tired in unison**. Singer Travis Shettle's slightly unusual singing voice translates the emotion and comedy of the music that is Piebald perfectly. Piebald played a perfect blend of old songs and new ones off of their latest effort, **ALL EARS ALL EYES ALL THE TIME**. Once Travis broke out the keyboard, the band

played an extremely satisfying and memorable rendition of **Haven't Tried It** (complete with kids from the audience on stage dancing around and singing). Piebald's 14-song set seemed to come effortlessly. As an encore, the band took requests, and as a result, **Grace Kelly with Wings** was played, to the audience's delight.

If you get a chance to see this amazing band, I suggest that you run, jump, skip, or whatever you need to do to get to the show. Trust me, you will not be disappointed.

7 SECONDS PIPEDOWN RED TAPE

June 20, 2004
@ Chain Reaction (Anaheim, CA)
By the Jeff Penalty

With all the killer shows I've been to lately, I keep thinking that eventually my luck will run out and I'll go to a show where I'm totally bored and nothing good happens. Not tonight, though. Not by a fucking long shot.

I'm sad to say I missed Red Tape's entire set due to a guest-list snafu, so I offer my apologies. From outside, they sounded okay. Fast, loud, hardcore stuff. My friend Jenny said they were fine, which is a pretty big compliment coming from her. Then again, we disagree on a lot of things where music is concerned, so who knows?

Pipedown opened for Anti-Flag at the last amazing show I went to, so I was looking forward to seeing them again. At that show, it took them a little while to get warmed up, but at this show they hit terminal velocity the moment they hit the stage. I have but one complaint about this band, and that is the singer's lack of inventiveness when it comes to stage banter. A lot of "Is everyone having a good time?" and "How's everybody doing tonight?" kind of comments. Other than that, the guy has an undeniable stage presence, and the band gives a good name to new school hardcore. If I had to offer some constructive criticism, I'd say work on the between-song speeches. Just trying to help!

The crowd packed in tight as 7 Seconds prepared to take the stage. I figured most of the crowd would be a bit older, and that it would be smaller, considering the band hasn't put out any new material in a long time; but I was pleasantly surprised to see that the band still gets the respect it deserves from the kids, who filled the place and knew every word. I got as close to the stage as I could, desperate for a chance to whoa-oh-oh along with

<BLOOD JUNKIES> July 16, 2004
Troubadour
(Hollywood)
Photos by
Priya Talwar

<SQUAD FIVE-O>

the band. I was slightly skeptical about what kind of performance they'd be able to deliver, not having toured in over three years and being, well, kinda old (I mean, let's just be honest); but my skepticism was pulverized out of existence by the end of the first song. The set was full of classics from **THE CREW** and **WALK TOGETHER, ROCK TOGETHER**, as well as scattered tunes from other albums (including their newest, which is slated for release this fall). For longtime fans of the band, the new stuff sounds very promising, a return to the sound that made them great in the first place. Where the hell do they get the energy? Maybe it's all that coffee Kevin's been brewing lately.

Chain Reaction has a well known no stage-diving policy, but tonight it was resoundingly ignored by crowd and the staff alike. The place just went off, plain and simple. I think everyone in attendance was equally blown away by the power of the performance. At the end of the night, the band treated us to a hard and fast two-song encore, for which I could barely stand. But I figured that if the band has the energy to dish it out, I'd better find the energy to take it. So back to the front I went with my fist in the air and my lungs on the verge of collapse as I sang along: **Use your head! Be aware! Give a FUCK!!!** I was completely worked by the end of it all. I was fully drained of all emotional and physical energy. I was sore and bruised. I was drenched in sweat. I didn't fully catch my breath until I was halfway home. It was not unlike getting off a roller coaster. And wanting to go again. It was as though 7 Seconds had been hanging out up on Mt. Olympus, allowing us mortals to entertain ourselves with our pathetic attempts to make music, and then, like the Zeus of hardcore, they descended upon us with the thunder and lightning of this show to remind us how it's really done. I remain in awe.



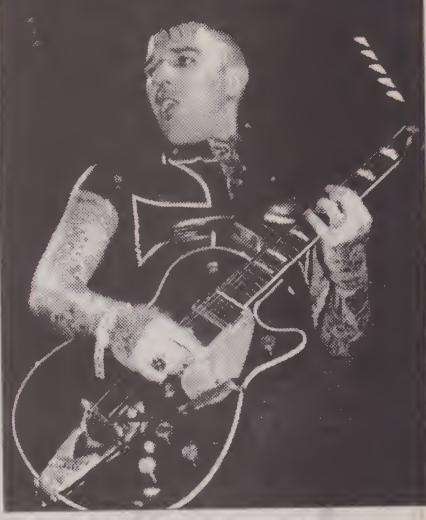
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<TIGER ARMY>



TIGER ARMY RECORD-RELEASE PARTIES

July 10 & 11, 2004

@ House of Blues (West Hollywood)

Text and photos by Annette
Ovanessian

A few quality nights would do me some good, since I've been working like hell, sleeping very little, and getting a bit lazy watching all the THREE S COMPANY mini-marathons this summer. So, what better two-nights than to help Tiger Army celebrate their smooth-flowing new album, *III: GHOST TIGERS RISE*? For both shows I went with my best girlfriends to enjoy looking good, drinking heavy and keeping our eyes out for some potential! Unfortunately, due to a prior drinking engagement, loss of time caused us to miss the opening acts on Saturday night (12 Step Rebels and Psycon Nine), but fortunately I walked in just in time for Tiger Army. Shoving through the packed crowd, I was able to get right up to the front, where I enjoyed their performance in full view.

Welcoming us with their signature intro, Tiger Army Never Die!, all hearts dropped. It was about to go off any minute! Geoff's vibrant green with black tiger-print bass immediately

caught my eye, as it was noticeably colorful. Nick 13 looked focused and ready to go! As the vocals came in, I felt a wave of chills from head to toe. The feeling didn't stop there, but it continued throughout the show and got a little heavier when Davey Havok from AFI came out on stage singing along to *Power of Moonlite*. From all the commotion in the audience over his appearance, I'm glad I actually got to hear him, as his voice dominated the chorus. Playing most of the favorites and even highlighting the new songs, Tiger Army's set was way too short for an album-release party. Playing for only one hour was a little upsetting...but at the same time, it still was my quick inspiration.

It is now Sunday, night two. Feeling just as excited as last night, I was ready for my second hour! Thankfully, I didn't miss the opening bands, Black Rose Phantoms and Pistol Grip. They really shaped the night with action and pure entertainment. I became an instant fan!

Young and talented band, Black Rose Phantoms impressed me with each song they played. With a deep and raspy voice, the singer/stand-up bassist took the spotlight. His bass lines were incredible, as he was dropping it to the floor, sitting on top of it, and beating it up with forceful slaps. To me, their whole performance really spread psychobilly music all around the room even more so than the crowd's extreme psychobilly fashion. Spending extra time emphasizing their musi-

cal abilities, they opened the show flawless. Visit their creepy-looking Website at www.blackrosephantoms.com for some mp3 samples.

Pistol Grip brought the crowd up to full speed. With intense energy and a hardcore stage presence, these guys exuded pure confidence. A couple things that really stood out were the amazing drumbeats and the way the vocalist Stax projected his voice directly at the crowd. With his tough smile, his rough vocals, and all the girls drooling over his good looks, Stax put a lot of focus into his songs.

Both of the opening bands satisfied the beginning of my night, but now it was Tiger Army's turn to hypnotize the audience with spiritual life! As the curtains pulled back and the first guitar string was heard, a special emotion poured right out of my soul. Acknowledging our attendance, Tiger Army spoke to the crowd and said, We fucking appreciate all of you here tonight. Then they proceeded to zap us into a musical trance filled with pure harmony. When Nick 13 shouted out, Do you want to hear some new shit, or do you want us to play our old shit that we've played over and over again? the crowd plead for anything. Whatever song they play is like a new experience. Changing up their set from the night before, they added a few never-before-played songs! I really can't remember which songs they've never played, but I do remember singing along to all of them. I was glad they played the cover of Morrissey's *The Loop*, which really showcased their skillful musicianship. Let's wreck, Geoff said as the powerful force of the mosh pit migrated toward my little corner, pushing me into the speakers. Geoff's new bass is fucking awesome, and it really made me think that all stand-up bass players should have a uniquely designed, custom-made bass that represents their skill.

Illuminating my whole night with soulful energy, my intense passion for Tiger Army uplifted my spirits to an ultimate high! Damn! The night went by so soon, but my recollection of the night will stay. Visit www.undergroundup.com for all the pictures of both nights.

<TIGER ARMY>



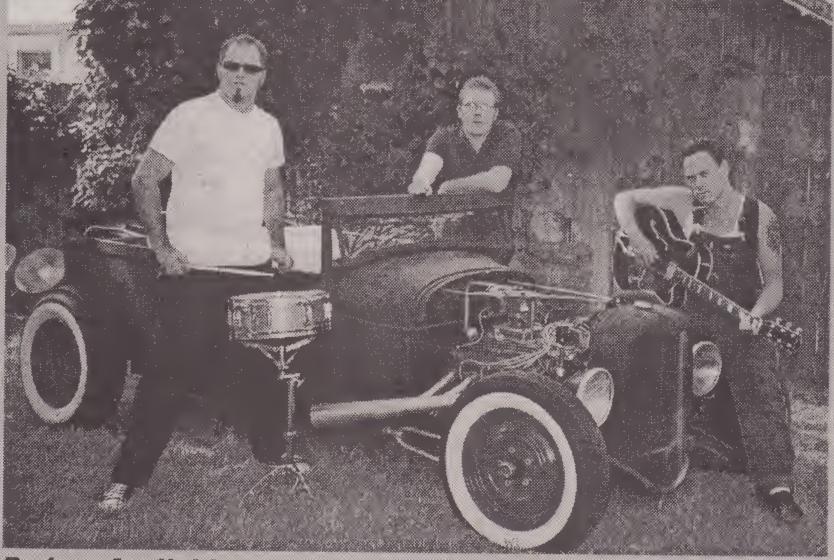
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RUFIO THE SOVIETTES

July 17, 2004

@ the Green Door (Oklahoma City, OK)
By H. Barry Zimmerman

It all begins at the 7-Eleven on Main Street in Norman, OK. I was looking for a caffeine solution to strap on to my low-flying buzz. Through a series of comments that I can't remember, the clerk and myself were debating Ray Charles v. Stevie Wonder. I was calling Stevie Wonder a genius and referencing SONGS IN THE KEY OF LIFE as I was paying for my Monster and a dollar's worth of peanuts (low-grade protein can be a rush). I get in Mikey's car. We are ready to ride. Mikey had brought his daughter, who had brought a friend. We were listening to The Replacements PLEASED TO MEET ME. As the youth brigade chatted it up in the back seat, I wandered down memory lane listening to those great tunes of yore. Paul Westerberg used to be my primary justifier for having no ambition (while wanting to rule the world, like KISS). Zoom.

Rufio, tonight's headliner, has been touched by the almighty lord of popular culture, MTV (bow down or be square). MTV blesses those who get in line and Rufio is in line.

As we pull up across the street from the Green Door, I can hear The Soviettes shaking the bricks loose. Annie and Sturgeon (both guitar) and Susy (bass) all sing sweet and powerfully with balls and hunger. The girls also understand the effectiveness of a breakdown and a comical stance (Susy was cracking me up with her cool hamminess). But at the heart of it, the band (including Henry on drums and guy vocals) was doing the ancient dance of rock for real. Also, their song structure is excellent. The Soviettes have great songs. The combination of guts and glory was easy to love. The Soviettes hail from Minneapolis (home of The Replacements). You can't plan this kind of synchronicity) and is on Green Day's Billy Joe's label, Adeline Records. The Soviettes have two discs out, LP and LPII. Most of The Soviettes 40-minute set consisted of songs from their first album (also known as The Red Album (I love commie humor)). From that album, some of the highlights were B Squad, Matt's Song, and Land of Clear Blue Radio. The Soviettes did play Portland from LPII, which was my favorite song of the entire evening. The Soviettes played it solid all the way. This prolific foursome is heading for profoundness. POW! The Soviettes are coming, the Soviettes are coming.

When The Soviettes were clearing their gear off of the stage, there was suddenly way more people in the Green Door. MTV at work.

Rufio is a quartet from Rancho Cucamonga, CA. The band runs through a sound check, and then the group disappears and the lights go down. The energy swept upward, and there was semi-hysterical screaming blasting

from the darkness. The drums started as the stage lights went up, and then Rufio's axeman/singer ran out. The place went ballistic. The first thing that I noticed was that lead guitarist Clark Domae is a really great melodic-hook writer. The next thing that I noticed was that lead singer Scott Sellers's voice is completely unthreatening. Rufio overall was unthreatening. The group is a parent's wet dream. Rufio is yet another installment in the radio-friendly pop punk, whiney bitch rock. They (Rufio, other Rufios, and money hungry-ass clowns at MTV, record labels, etc.) have sucked everything meaningful about rock music out of the progressions and replaced them with a bland, gutless pose and posers. The game makes you all disposable. This pop squat is boy-band music for older teens that now think they rock. While I felt sick, the kids seemed to love it. Blasphemers! Anyway, the audience sang along, sounding like the stadium crowd on FRAMPTON COMES ALIVE. Very rock star. The crowd moshed and danced and smiled like god was in town. Maybe he was. Does god work for MTV now?

After Rufio had ruined my buzz and made me sleepy, I ran into Ben Snakepit, the comic book Sartre behind the punk-rock comic SNAKE PIT. He was hanging out at The Soviettes T-shirt-and-more stand. We talked about Woody Guthrie (I had on my Woody Guthrie Folk Festival T-shirt). He showed me his Woody-inspired tattoo. I picked up a copy of THE SNAKE PIT BOOK (three years of SNAKE PIT), the newest anthology. Ben has done a three-panel strip about his day every day for years now. It's very cool. I can't stop reading it; I'm hooked. He is out on tour with The Soviettes, living his life like a comic strip character.

As far as my evening went, The Soviettes were great, and I encourage anyone interested in real rock to look them up and support original music. Rufio just sucked (for being them, another same-o emo band) and that's the way rock n roll hype goes. Life lessons to be learned. Hell, some bands gotta suck so that we can tell the difference. Everyone has a purpose. Here is to those who get in line to suck. How gutless indeed. Cheers.

SONIC YOUTH WOLF EYES XBXRX

July 21, 2004

@ the Marquee (Tempe, AZ)
By Sarah Laidlaw

Sonic Youth is a grunge/experimental rock legend associated with New York's no wave genre, which was an offshoot of punk that focused on artistic expression and noisy experimental rock. Sonic Youth formed in 1981 as a harsh, experimental garage rock band with influences in jazz. 1985's BAD MOON RISING marked their transition into a more socially acceptable sound with the incorporation of identifiable melodies into their raw, experimental noise. Credited with helping to uphold the underground rock and grunge scenes throughout their 23-year existence, Sonic Youth has

continued to tour and generate music. Their latest release, SONIC NURSE, is their 19th album. It's full of their signature experimental rock, with just enough melody to keep listeners engaged. To support SONIC NURSE, Sonic Youth is touring with xbxrX and Wolf Eyes, who complement Sonic Youth well with their own style of experimental music.

xbxrX started off the show with an exciting performance, which included a lot of screaming, the guitar and singer jumping off-stage and running around in the crowd, and even balloons! xbxrX's music is often labeled as weird rock. The vocalist has a high-pitched, scratchy scream, and the rest of the music is rock with an offbeat funk feel. It could be related to a cracked-out Modest Mouse. They only played for about 15 minutes before Wolf Eyes started setting up their eclectic bundle of equipment, which took almost as long as xbxrX's performance.

Wolf Eyes can be described only as experimental, complete with bongs, large bendy metal scraps, a drum machine, and two microphones for the singer, one regular and one distorted. The vocals sounded much like Marilyn Manson's, and the rest of the music was an unusual concoction of sounds that belong in a haunted house or a horror movie. I was standing there wondering what was making the crowd grow and move to the music as Wolf Eyes continued their performance, when my friend turned to me and said his roommate could never play this music because he needed to live by rules. This jarred my thoughts, and I realized why Wolf Eyes and other bands like them are so appreciated: they prove that rules aren't necessary in music. They have found courage to completely ignore any rules and simply make music.

Finally, the reason all of the flannel-wearing, Cobain-idolizing 20-to-mid-40-year-olds came together under one roof tonight, Sonic Youth, strolled on stage. Sonic Youth's members have kept their grunge fashion, especially Thurston Moore, with his shaggy hair, oversized black shirt, and dirty jeans. Moore, Kim Gordon, and Lee Ranaldo took turns singing the songs, but Gordon sang the most. For two songs, she even put down her bass, as Jim O'Rourke took over that part, and concentrated on her vocal performance. She danced around like a flower child, spinning in circles, with her hands making flowing movements in the air. Watching their performance was like watching a newly formed garage band, not a 23-year-old nationally touring band. The only special effects were six color-changing rectangular lights at the back of the stage, which looked like sound monitors until they lit up. Sonic Youth hardly uttered a complete sentence to the crowd during their entire performance, and almost every song started off with the drummer tapping off. This is a band that sticks to simply playing their music and letting the crowd find their energy through that. No hype, no effects, no pep talks, just Sonic Youth's music. And the crowd did find energy. An amazing amount of raggedy heads bounced around in the packed audience, a few clouds of pot smoke lingered in the high beams of the venue, and everybody moved to

the music...that is, until the second encore. Sonic Youth was called out onto the stage twice by a cheering audience with no place to go, as the lights were not turned on yet. They played two songs each encore. The first encore was fine, but the second turned the night into one of the most annoying experiences of my life. They ended the final song with guitar feedback, which is to be expected from an old grunge band, but they didn't stop: they continued holding their guitars and bass up to their amps allowing feedback for 25 minutes, maybe longer. I don't know how long exactly, because I left, like over half of the crowd. I think they were trying to be artistic by making different and constant feedback noises. However, I wanted to drive my car into a tree after the show because I was so annoyed by sitting through 25 minutes of that while waiting for something else to happen.

As I reflect on the rest of the show to write this article, I realize that it was a decent show, and something any old Sonic Youth fan or experimental music fan should see. My only advice is not to stay for the encore.

THE GOOD LIFE

July 22, 2004

@ the Knitting Factory (New York)
By Matthew Siblo

Soon after Tim Kasher introduced himself and the rest of The Good Life to the capacity crowd at the Knitting Factory, Mr. Kasher promptly informed the New York crowd that they could all kiss my fucking ass. Not you're typical kind of crowd baiting, but Tim is certainly anything but your average troubadour. While generally recognized as the brains behind Saddle Creek emo-rock sensation Cursive, Kasher also moonlights in The Good Life, a project that continues to gain prominence and is quickly blossoming into a seemingly more serious gig.

After Mr. Kasher's playful torment, the band kicked things off with *Leaving Omaha*, the lead off track from their latest EP, *LOVERS NEED LAWYERS*. They then segued right into the EP's second track, the hook-laden, meta-reality sing-along *Entertainer*, an upbeat tune that employs much of the same introspection found on Cursive's *THE UGLY ORGAN*. Kasher's yelps of *Entertainer! /Entertain me! / Give the audience what they want!* came across delightfully tongue-in-cheek while being performed in front of such a subdued and quietly judgmental group of spectators. Tim's rapport with the crowd was particularly entertaining (at one point he proclaimed to the audience that he's a cop-a-feel kind of guy), as he continues to prove himself as one of the most relatable voices in independent music today. As Kasher continued to lay out his intelligent brand of self-deprecating wit and banter onto the reactionary audience, he sheepishly told the crowd *I'm trying to ruin this and not to let him. It's this kind of vulnerability that makes Kasher so endearing: you want to root for a guy like him because his music and lyrics reflect situations that we've all had to endure. A song like O'Rourke's, 1:20 a.m. is so powerful*

because we can all relate to the feeling of being drunk and lonely when the whole world is in love. Or the tale of the unlucky friend who might finally get a shot at happiness in *Always a Bridesmaid*. Kasher's seamless ability to connect with his audience through songs becomes intensified in a live setting, as he's able to drunkenly interact with the audience he both loves and despises. The band's set spanned their catalogue, including *The Birthday Present* off their debut, *NOVENA ON A NOCTURN*, to a preview of a number of songs from the upcoming full-length, *ALBUM OF THE YEAR*. While the vast majority of these songs came across much more subdued than those on the feisty *LOVERS NEED LAWYERS* EP, all were well received, with many in attendance already singing along.

As the evening came to a close, Kasher and co. refused to succumb to the recent encore epidemic, instead deciding to just remain on stage and continue to play three more songs (a move that Kasher also routinely pulls with *Cursive*). The audience was then treated to a rock encore that consisted of *Notes in His Pocket*, *Friction!*, and *Lovers Need Lawyers*. A rousing conclusion to an already memorable night, *The Good Life* continues to prove itself as one of the few side projects that might soon come close in rivaling its predecessor.

THE PARTISANS SHATTERED FAITH READY FOR VEGAS THE HAVE NOTS THE WARGASIMS

July 23, 2004
@ the Galaxy (Santa Ana, CA)
By Erik Thomas

New arrivals to the scene The Wargasims took the stage to a surprising barrage of cheers and a little bit of laughter from the very young crowd. Usually when opening bands come on, everyone sits down and talks, maybe hangs out outside for a while but not for these guys. Everyone came down to the dance floor to listen and cheer them on. Mixing politics with fast, sloppy gutter punk, The Wargasims put on an entertaining show, with singer KO jumping around on stage and even lassoing the audience with the mic chord! At the end of their crazy set, they covered Fear's *I Love Living In The City*, which got everyone wild up and in the mosh pit.

Coming straight out of Huntington Beach and proving to be nothing more than everything else that comes out of there, The Have Nots took the stage and bored me so much that I almost fell asleep. Combining a little bit of a *Smut Peddlers* sound with just about every other skin band from Huntington, The Have Nots offer nothing original or even entertaining. They had to beg the audience to mosh pit, which is always a bad sign. I wouldn't recommend seeing The Have Nots to my worst enemy.

What I would recommend is the hilarious ensemble of Ready for Vegas. Actually, these guys aren't that great of a band, and it seems

< LARS F & THE BASTARDS >



July 9, 2004
Glasshouse
(Pomona, CA)
Photo by Punkr130

like they go for the high dessert sound like *Throw Rag* but aren't as entertaining or good. However, they do this one song, *Fat Lip*, that needs to be heard by everyone. Throw in a Misfits *Last Remorse* cover, and you have a decent set from a new band.

Finally, the bands everyone was waiting for. First up was the very energetic and fun band Shattered Faith. Playing fast, simple chords with an upbeat and original voice (unlike all the O.C. bands that rip off *The Stitches*), Shattered Faith actually impressed me, and I want to see them again. The crowd were pitting non-stop to the sounds of SF, and the music seemed to never stop.

After a very long time, The Partisans finally took the stage, and everyone went nuts. More pitting from the crowd. Singer Spike even made a joke about how young the crowd was. I was surprised to see that hardly any skin-headed barbarians made it to this show, and that lead to absolutely no fights. I don't quite see how The Partisans got the Oi! reputation that they did, but no one seemed to miss all the skins in attendance, as everyone enjoyed a fun, safe night with a great band headlining. Ending the first set with *17 Years of Hell*, The Partisans came back to do an encore that included *Bastard in Blue*, dedicating it to the L.A.P.D. The Partisans will continue their tour along the U.S. so try to check them out (I'm of course talking to the kids, seeing as that's all that showed up to this one) and have a great time with some great music.

TRANSISTOR TRANSISTOR MALADY AMANDA WOODWARD RED

July 25, 2004
@ First Unitarian Church (Philadelphia)
By Erika Owens

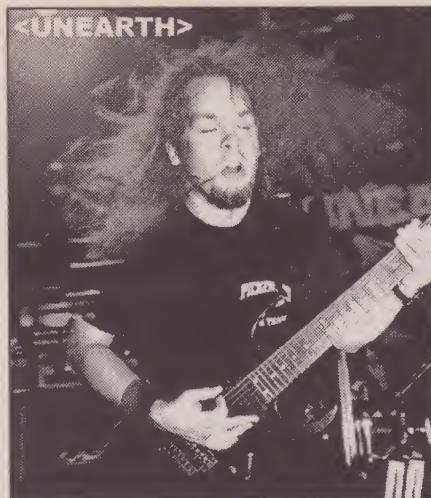
Churches have a long and prominent history as cheap and convenient show space and the First Unitarian is certainly no exception. Kids pack their basement regularly to see all sorts of bands rock out while rows of pews

are present just a few feet above. I don't know if it was the pews or just the fact it was a Sunday in a church, but the crowd was extremely sedentary. With a Level Plane line-up, insanity is expected; and while the bands tried mightily to connect that craziness to the crowd it was all to no avail. What a shame that the one-man-mosh-pit kid was the only one actually reacting to the music and visibly enjoying the show. While the lame, lifeless crowd may have given the show a different tone, the bands were undeterred and just sought to kick ass even more.

Even though this was mostly a Level Plane showcase, opening band Red was a local outfit who, sadly, I missed. I arrived just in time to see Amanda Woodward. Okay, I don't find that name exactly enthralling, either, but it is so misleading. They are from France, and play this intense, driven barrage that needs no translation. When the band first appeared onstage, the lead singer was wearing a Tarzan-like animal-print costume and was carrying a crutch. It was a very perplexing introduction. But, alas, he spoke to us in English! Little did we know that was the last time we'd hear an familiar tongue for the rest of the set. I have no familiarity with French, so for all I know he could have been mocking us between songs and singing awful things in them but there was really no time to be bothered with such paranoia. Amanda Woodward's music is just so expressive, so immediate, so almost tangible that there's no need to run to Babelfish you're already caught. This was their last show after five weeks of touring, but there were no signs of fatigue and no apparent lack of effort or energy. A thrilling set that just gave more ferocity to their recorded material.

Malady appeared next. Although they do not have a record out yet and the name is not very familiar, the band's ancestors certainly are. Yes, the legendary ex-members of status must precede this discussion, as Malady is formed from members of City of Caterpillar and Pg. 99. The set began with Chris, lead singer of Pg. 99 and Mannequin, pregaming by drinking a teddy-bear bottle of honey. Yuck! With the kind of growling and screaming that accompanied those previous bands, it's quite understandable that he'd want to coat his throat; but Malady actually turned out to be rather sing-songy. Malady is not as elusive as Pg. 99 nor as detached as CoC, able to inhabit a middle ground that is all its own. The band even had a different look, being slightly more cleaned-up! The sound, the look, and the interaction with the lifeless crowd signified a distinct break from the past bands. Sure, the screaming was there, but it was more melodic and a lot less restrained. That freeness and openness actually made the set pretty fun, rather than just an intense investigation of past wrongs. Christ outright name-dropped HIS two other bands, and that didn't even get a response from the crowd. As they gain credibility on their own which is well deserved Malady will not be so easily ignored.

Transistor Transistor continued the jovial mood of the show, in spite of any too-cool-for-school disdain from the crowd. Their set drew heavily from the split with wolves but also fea-



tured a lot of new material. Black Cat was the first new song, and it was just completely unhinged. Kill the Head and the Body Will Die started off a little slower and with intermittent lulls, but the explosions soon came and included serious shredding and even megaphone action. Aside from a few technical issues, Transistorx2 laid waste to the stage through several songs and employed a few oddball accessories, like an inaudible tambourine. The lead singer's guitar strap read, I'm sick of music and we hate each other, but their set transcended any fatigue and topped off an already caustic show.

Transistorx2 and Amanda Woodward closed out their tour with this show, but Malady is still on tour getting everyone excited about their upcoming release on Level Plane. Check level-plane.com for info about the tour dates and how to pick up all of these fab bands' releases.

LAMB OF GOD ATREYU EVERY TIME I DIE UNEARTH

July 30, 2004

@ Soma (San Diego)

Text by Thomas Murray

Photos by Mark A. Whitaker

Well, we missed Unearth due to a bill discrepancy over at the Black Angus. I cannot express how truly pissed I am, for they are a solid band and I was really looking forward to seeing them rock out. Their buzz is currently more active than my roommate's sick bowels. My childish pouting was distracted by a sighting of local San Diego pseudo-celebrity, the Squirrel Master. This character, sort of an urban legend, can be seen at events ranging from Chargers games to hopped-out reggae fests. This lanky cartoon of a man unleashes his pet squirrel to run freely between the ankles of unsuspecting patrons and then back to the friendly confines of his coat pocket. Amidst my awe, I felt a swell of frustration. Soma security had just given me all kinds of shit about bringing a pen into the show, even after I dropped the bomb and told them I work

for SKRATCH. I get harassed about a pen while this guy is inside with a fucking squirrel in his pocket. It doesn't seem right.

Every Time I Die slipped onstage as my dizzy head fought back visions of the Squirrel Master and how awesome Unearth's performance probably was. I recognized the lyrics of I've Been Gone a Long Time accompanied by a frenzy of instrumental accompaniment that only a fan could love (sort of how only a mom thinks an ugly kid is cute). Body parts swung like weapons, encouraged by ETID's frantic beats and screechy lyrics. Certain elements reminded me of Glassjaw, but there was an element here that kept me from really enjoying the show: basically, I found the band to be annoying. Despite decent energy and so-so sound quality, there wasn't enough of something special to set them apart. They are not a bad act to see live, I just didn't douse my drawers at their performance.

Atreyu, on the other hand, turned me from badass to bed-wetter faster than a drunken ex-girlfriend with cold hands. I am beginning to worry about them, though. If it weren't for the fact that I listen to Bleeding Mascara 900 times a day, I might have a problem with an ad I saw for Vision Street Wear. Hopefully, it's a symbiotic relationship. Also, there's the picture of frontman Alex Varkatzas on THE CURSE insert, a picture that shows him holding his hand over a flame while making hard love to the camera. That aside, I was the fortunate witness of all I wanted to see and hear from the new album. This included Bleeding Mascara, Right Side of the Bed, and This Flesh a Tomb, which contains a little instrumental breakdown about three minutes into the song that sounded so fucking cool that I almost laid down in the middle of the mosh pit and called it quits for the evening. But this would have deprived me of yet another tasty number off of THE CURSE: You Eclipsed by Me, which reached a different kind of peak, one that involved the audience chanting along I will / Not be broken. I joined in and (again) wanted to piss myself. At one point in the show, Varkatzas had seen enough of some fake tough guy in the front row who kept giving him the finger. Varkatzas called him out and made everyone spit in his face. It was great, and I hope that kid felt like a real asshole. Drummer and back-up crooner Brandon Saller leapt up from

his drums and dished out dirty looks, dirty words, and a face full of dirty backwash from his water bottle. A finale of Lip Gloss and Black gave an already happy audience the closure they needed. An amazing set.

Many people cleared out after Atreyu, which was fine by me. I'd had all the huddled body heat I could stand for one evening. I smiled as I enjoyed sort of a post-yoga/post-sex body tingling that lingered from Atreyu's set. But then, buzz kill, as my pen ran out of ink. Since security had confiscated my other pen as part of their strict NO PEN POLICY, I was forced to rely on memory. Unfortunately, I have the attention span of a goldfish, so this becomes frustrating, especially with the distracting threat of violence surrounding me, as I was forced into the pit to grind it out with the tough guys of San Diego, who swirled around in a circle pit that lasted the entirety of LOG's set. The music was in our faces from the first scrape of pick on string, as the last of the clown dancers were swept away in the churning of the pit's gears. LOG throws back to a time when metal scared the crap out of your parents and prevented you from getting laid. A quick scan of the audience would have told you that not too many were going home to hump after this one, so let bloody noses and swollen elbows be the glory. Lamb of God didn't say much, they just let song blend into song as they trashed that place old school. There was some quick promotion of the upcoming album ASHES OF THE WAKE, which should be out August 31.

SOULFLY ILL NINO CRISIS

August 10, 2004
@ Canes (San Diego)
By Thomas Murray

It's difficult to carve your way through a venue like Canes when everyone in there thinks they are bad. No one says excuse me, and no one will let you through without pushing them aside, so you fight or you don't see the damn show. The female lead singer of Crisis had the longest and most random dreadlocks I have ever seen. Some clumps of hair were three feet long, others were only six inches; and all were dyed random colors. Crisis had a chemistry that struck me as odd for an opening band: it was just too good. The sound was perfect for warming up the head banging muscles and politely shoving the guy next to you. They were noticeably comfortable together. Later, we learned that they had been touring together for 11 years now. That explained it. The small stage was piled high with drum kits and amplifiers for Ill Nino and Soulfly, so Crisis was very limited in their movement. They worked it though, and it seemed the crowd was greatly in favor of their whole performance.

Speaker cabinets still crowded the stage and the floor grew more packed and uncomfortable by the second. Sweat began to bead and drip between thighs to initiate the dreaded chafe or jock itch. The patrons of Canes needed a

refreshing blast of Ill Nino, and they needed it fast. Before you could yell out, Brazil rules the soccer world, Ill Nino was up there pumping their sound out into the audience like a fire truck cooling out a structure fire. Many ignored the heat while punishing each other in the pit, which was controlled by the watchful eye and strong arm of the red-shirted Canes security (who, by the way, put up with a lot for eight dollars an hour). The heads that weren't banging were tilted back, soaking in the tribal metal melody as Ill Nino balanced between songs from their first and second albums. Early on, we heard God Save Us, Te Amo (I Hate You), and then a slightly remixed version of What Comes Around that had more of a techno feel than album owners are used to. It was during Rumba that I realized how effectively Ill Nino uses the dramatic pause. When their music is hardest and meanest and most in-your-face, they stop, and the silence is powerful. Then they kick it back in, and it sounds better and stronger than before. They finished off with Liar and should have then quit while they were ahead; instead, they proceeded to go off on an anti-Bush rant. Now, I can appreciate a little go out and vote motivation, but just because I sing along with your songs doesn't mean that you can tell me who to vote for. As if this wasn't insulting and annoying enough, they then parted the stage yelling Smoke weed, which is cheesy, infantile, and second-rate. What's next: Shoot heroin? Drink beer? C'mon! I love this band, but I left this show disappointed.

With my frustrations at peak, I decided I probably should take a few turns in the pit during Soulfly but I'd wait for a familiar song to tempt me in there, like the Pied Piper luring me in with his flute. After a short intro song, the band came out and stood before us. There was Max Cavalera, standing like a god in front of me, 20 feet away, with his four-stringed guitar in hand (he removes the two thinnest strings because he never uses them). At the height of the build-up, Max leapt up the air and fell upon his strings in classic metal form. Whoops Max fell upon dead strings, and there was no sound. DAMMIT. They regrouped but obviously could not recapture that effect. They played many songs off their two latest albums (which it seems not as many people are familiar with). When they busted out a song like Eye for an Eye or Back to the Primitive, the crowd reacted more enthusiastically. Bleed is an emotional thing to see, especially since Dana's younger brother was on hand to sing the second vocal part. Dana was a good friend of the band who passed away far before his time, and Bleed is about him so to see his younger brother singing that part gives goose bumps to those who know the story. Later in the set, Soulfly reached into its roots and brought out a classic Sepultura tune, War for Territory. Max was the lead singer and one of the founding members of Sepultura, so hearing him do this song is special for Sepultura fans who all secretly wish that Max never left the band. I had some hopes for this show that weren't fulfilled: I wanted badly to see a drum circle that I have seen Soulfly do before; and I thought, especially since they were playing with another band of Brazilians that a heavy-ass drum circle, that it was a shoe-in. Nope.

Also, I thought that when they played Jump the Fuck Up from their second album PRIMITIVE, that Corey S., from Slipknot, guest part might be sung by Cristian Machado of Ill Nino. No dice there, either: they just skipped that part entirely. At least they didn't tell me how to vote.

AGAINST ME! THE WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

August 12, 2004
@ the First Unitarian Church
(Philadelphia)
By Matthew Siblo

As I meandered my way around the capacity crowd of the exhaustingly hot First Unitarian Church, I couldn't help but appreciate the fleeting sights and smells of summer. Bondage pants were hiked up a bit higher, personal aromas coming off a tad more potently it was the perfect atmosphere for such a high-energy show. While the sold-out crowd encompassed the entire spectrum of music enthusiasts, the vibe felt distinctly like the all-ages VFW punk shows of yore an unfortunate rarity among the current trend of increasingly mechanical, commercialized venues and performances. It was the first night of Philly's fourth annual Pointless Fest, and the stage was set for what was to be one of the most memorable bills I'd seen all summer.

If you've never seen The World/Inferno Friendship Society, words can hardly describe the absolute joy that these Garden State vaudevillian misfits bring to the stage every time they play. Incorporating everything from absurd, dictator-like theatrics to the undeniable magic that comes from a properly executed waltz, The World/Inferno Friendship Society's live show simply cannot be stopped. While lead singer Jack Terricloth's witty between-song banter focused heavily on the band's intense love of their home state of New Jersey, the Philadelphia crowd hardly seemed to notice and ate it all up. Blending a seamless mix of jazz and swing with a straight-up punk aesthetic, The World/Inferno Friendship Society are both visually and musically one of the most unique and entertaining bands I've seen in a good while. Finally a band that can give those unfortunate people from New Jersey something to be proud of.

Gainesville's Against Me! are one of the few punk bands today that continue to breathe fresh air into a genre that has recently made strides towards becoming an irrelevant, aging dinosaur. Incorporating both protest ballads la Billy Bragg with rapid-fire punk anthems, Against Me! has quickly become a band that the whole independent music community could stand behind. This was the case, of course, until the band inked a deal with punk behemoth Fat Wreck Chords, a move that placed the band's anarchistic and grassroots ideals greatly into question. But if any of these ideological inconsistencies have taken away from the band's incredibly intense live show, you'd be hard pressed to find anyone in attendance that could notice. As soon as the band took the stage, a sense of genuine excitement fell over

the heat-exhausted crowd and the entire room seemed to pulsate with energy. Playing an even mix of songs from REINVENTING AXL ROSE and THE ETERNAL COWBOY, the intense 45-minute set seemed to barely scratch the surface of satiating everyone's rabid requests. Very few bands today can create such a genuine connection with their audience. After witnessing Against Me! in action, I know that they are of that minority. The band was able to single-handedly transform a whole room of transient strangers into heartfelt believers, all within the span of an hour. If punk rock died a long time ago, it seems as though no one thought to tell Against Me!

THE STRESSSTOUR: SHADOWS FALL AS I LAY DYING HIMSA REMEMBERING NEVER

August 18, 2004

@ H.O.B. Anaheim (Anaheim, CA)
By Mabel Lam

You might have seen me as I was pacing the line, back and forth, back and forth, asking for an extra ticket for this COMPLETELY sold-out show. Then again, you could've mistaken me for one of the horde of kids who were also desperate to get in. Curious tourists milled around wondering what this new, hip culture was all about, occasionally gathering up the courage to tap the shoulders of any grungy kid in a signature black shirt and blue jeans. To sum it up, if the Justice League wielded death-metal guitars and long, billowy hair, this would be their show.

And justice was served, indeed, during the first set from Remembering Never. When they broke out into their first song, apparently some skin-head started beating up kids and was hollering out something along the lines of, oMgz! White power! How he managed to overcome the roar of the lead singer's ferocity I don't know. Since the kid created such a commotion, though, the song came to an abrupt halt and the kid was ejected from the show. Crisscrossing across the stage furiously, the lead singer angrily growled, Well, I hope all the trash has left the building now, then continued to righteously denounce all white supremacists with the full support of the audience. The mood was set for the night. They resumed their performance in an all-out fury, only pausing in between songs like Incisions and Grenade in Mouth Tragedy to voice their advocacy for the straight-edgers, PETA kids, and vegans you know, typical superhero shout-outs to fellow superheroes.

I had been craving for Himsa ever since I had first seen them for the first time a while ago. As soon as they hit the stage, they exploded into a frenzy, and the entire floor carried out their excitement. Ultimately, this five-piece group from Seattle flawlessly unleashed the most brutal performance out of the whole night. They catered to the need for speed, simple as that. When lead singer Johnny Pettibone wasn't delivering his screams and howls to the masses in songs such as Rain to the Sound of Panic, he would be chugging down water

and spitting out mists to the beats. To the audience, this seemed like he was blowing smoke out of his mouth and into the air another act considered to be very superhero-worthy.

I'm sorry to say that I ended up missing most of As I Lay Dying's set. The girl standing a couple feet away from me was hammered enough for five people and fell ON me. Between helping pick her up, nervously watching her fall out of the corner of my eye, having her fall on me again, and heading over to the bathroom to wash my now-sticky, sweaty arms, I didn't catch too much. However, I was there for the last portion of their set and for the song, Elegy, when the lead singer from Himsa bounded back onstage to accompany them.

Now the end to this wild night neared. The only thing left to consummate the ferocity that had been building up this entire time was to let Shadows Fall loose. As lead singer Brian Fair strode out onto the stage, (complete with all the glory of his thick, long dreadlocks), the crowd let loose, as well. All their inhibitions? Gone. Their shoes? Gone (well, they were just all over the place). In addition, the fact that this show was being recorded for their upcoming DVD, THE WAR WITHIN, only contributed to the furor. Among their set list was Destroyer of Senses and a new song: The Power of I and I. Finally, the night came to a closing when they finished off with an old favorite, Crushing Belial. It's obvious that THEY'RE the real superheroes. Why couldn't THEY have done the SPIDER-MAN TWO soundtrack?

MOTO MUSIC MAYHEM SHOW:

SOCIAL DISTORTION PENNYWISE A STATIC LULLABY KOTTONMOUTH KINGS METAL MULISHA

August 21, 2004
@ National Orange Show Complex
(San Bernardino, CA)
By Marcia Taylor

I've been pretty burnt out on the music scene lately after reviewing shows for seven-and-a-half years. However, when the opportunity to attend this event came up, I was thrilled, because it offered a line-up of bands with varied musical styles Kottonmouth Kings, A Static Lullaby, Pennywise, and Social Distortion with freestyle motocross demos by the Metal Mulisha. The truth is that I was much more excited about the latter, being a novice dirt-bike rider AND a fan of the Crusty Demon videos. My only concern was the August heat in SB and the possibility of a huge crowd. A couple of years ago, the high temperature and massive audience made the Inland Invasion show a semi-miserable experience. However, fate smiled on the Inland Empire on Saturday, with temperatures in the low 90s. Furthermore, the event wasn't crowded, and those who came were very laid back. It reminded me of the early years of the Hootenanny, with short lines for food and drinks and the opportunity to get close to both the stage and the freestyle motocross area.

I'd only heard good things about Kottonmouth Kings but somehow never gotten around to seeing the band perform. The Kings infectious beats sucked me right in, and I joined the crowd in celebrating the joys of ganja to the strains of Dying Daze (which was dedicated to the Metal Mulisha), Killa Kali, Johnny's Got a Problem, Suburban Life, Bad Habits, and So High (to name just some of the songs the group played). After the last song, the guys departed for Seattle's Hempfest. You've got to appreciate a band that stays in character on AND off stage.

I'm not sure what one calls the music A Static Lullaby plays. Is it emcore or new metal? All I know is that the band sounded a lot like Avenged Sevenfold and others of that ilk, with the screaming vocals and metal guitar riffage. I wasn't disappointed when the group ended a very short set that seemed to feature about six songs. My companion at the event, who likes this kind of music, said that it's often better on disc than live. I'd definitely have to hear the band again at a smaller venue to make a fair assessment.



The majority of the people who came to the event for the music came to see Pennywise and Social Distortion. In fact, I saw more people sporting Pennywise Ts than any other band's, although I'd be hard-pressed to judge whether Pennywise or the Metal Mulisha were better represented in the T-shirt arena. As always, Pennywise performed a solid set, mixing old and new tunes with a few old-school covers of songs by Descendents and Misfits. In between songs, vocalist Jim Lindberg told jokes (How many motocross riders does it take to change a light bulb? Wah, wah, wah, wah, one), as well as prodding the crowd to increase the action in the already very enthusiastic pit.

Social Distortion's performance, the last of the evening's, was great! The last time I'd seen the band was at the Inland Invasion, where the set was very mellow, if not downright folk-oriented. This time, the band combined old songs (Telling Them, Mommy's Little Monster, 1945) with selections from 1992's SOMEWHERE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL (Cold Feelings, Making Believe, When She Begins) and some new material, such as Don't Take Me for Granted (which the band has been playing out for awhile now), Nickels and Dimes (about the gangsta life), and Reach for the Sky. Of the new songs, I especially liked Nickels and Dimes, which showed that Ness has retained his ability to write meaningfully about life on the margins of society.

The Metal Mulisha riders performed their array of aerial magic in between each of the bands sets. No new tricks were debuted, but it was exciting to see back flips, lazy boys, superman seat grabs, and more LIVE! Riders were Brian Deegan, Beau Manley, Jeremy Twitch Stenberg, Colin Scummy Morrison, Ronnie Kung Fu Faisst, Jeff Ox Kargola, and Shawn Highland. The last was the only rider on a four-stroke. I had an opportunity to talk with him afterwards and asked why he preferred the heavier four-stroke. Because I'm a fat ass, the 65 rider replied, and I'd have to switch to light beer if I rode a two-stroke. I have to say that the Metal Mulisha guys, whose bad-boy image precedes them wherever they go, could not be more gracious to their supporters, who range from prepubescent little guys to hot babes to middle-aged moms and dads to aging bikers. They love what they do, and it shows in their enthusiasm for and dedication to a sport that they make look easy, but which is anything but.



August 22, 2004
@ Sunset Junction Street Fair
(Hollywood)
By Jennifer Swann

It was a quarter past 8, and the sun had just set over the Sunset Junction Street Fair, leaving a cool misty layer of darkness. Thousands of eager fans, from 11-year-olds with mohawks attending their very first punk show to 50-year-old tattoo-stained punk veterans feeling nostalgic as they pogoed again amongst the

crowd to the same vibrant beats they grew up with and fell in love with were all packed tightly into one massively diverse crowd. New generations mixed with the old generations. Hippies, Rastafarians, gays, blacks, punks, skins, greasers, grandpas, and activists were all there together experiencing music and feeling it reverberate throughout our bodies.

We've got to meet her! We've just got to! my friend Sara and I kept repeating the whole day long. It seemed our one main goal for the summer was to meet our hero, goddess, and idol, Miss Exene Cervenka, frontwoman of legendary L.A. punk band X. We're gonna meet her, I can feel it! Sara exclaimed as we walked toward the stage area. Me, being as unprofessional as possible, forgot to get a press badge from SKRATCH to get backstage, so we had to do it the old-fashioned way: determination, dedication, and (of course) a bit of insanity here and there. We raced past the herds of people coming in by the dozens and made our way towards the entrance of the stage, figuring that Exene and the band had to arrive here sooner or later. As if by some sort of miracle, just as we reached the front gates, a car pulled up, and none other than Exene herself shuffled out looking messy and crazy and absolutely radiant. I remember freezing up for a few seconds in complete shock that I was within 10 feet of this amazing woman and legendary punk icon. After that initial shock, it suddenly hit me, and I rushed up to her...and she agreed to take pictures with us and chat about our hometown, even though she had to rush backstage to get ready. She had such a warm, intriguing vibe about her that for a few brief moments I imagined her as the really sweet, wacky aunt I never had who would bake me cookies and tell me stories of past revolutions and let me wear her old vintage dresses and buy my friends and me beer, even though we were underage. And then, before I knew it, she was gone, disappearing behind the red backstage curtain, and I just felt so fucking high that I might as well have floated back into that endless crowd.

When the first note of You're Phone's Off the Hook but You're Not was struck, everyone

went wild, and three raging mosh pits were simultaneously formed. It was the most intense concert I had ever been to, one where even if you wanted to stand still for one moment, you just couldn't without constantly flinging your arms about to push everyone else off of you. Like a raging ocean, we all moved and swayed together and surfed in and out like giant waves, falling over and catching each other, then jumping back up and screaming our fucking lungs out. It seemed like X played forever and ever. I almost thought that they would play until sunrise and that we'd still be dancing and not care about work or school or anything else. Every song felt like an encore, each played faster and harder and louder and exceeding the previous song, each of which I thought could not be topped. At one point, I pushed my way to the front of the crowd, where there was less air and bodies were tighter and hotter. Exene's faded, purple locks seemed to glow like an eerie halo around her head. She twirled about on stage, fluttering her black sundress back and forth and gliding along as if she were at a glamorous ballroom dance, oblivious to the thousands of people moshing below her. While everyone else seemed angry and snarling, Billy Zoom was beaming happily the whole time. D.J.'s drums pounded fiercely, Billy's glittery Gibson screeched dynamic guitar solos, John's bass lines were precise and powerful, and Exene wailed over it all like a wolf starving for noise. To finish the set, X ripped through Nausea, a crowd favorite that transported everyone back to 1980, and we pogoed along like fucking kangaroos on speed. The music felt infinite.

Walking back to the car, I suddenly remembered that I had school the next day, and it seemed amazing to me how much music can take you out of reality. If only for one mere hour of bliss, seeing X was one of the best hours of my life. When I got home, my ears were buzzing and ringing and somewhat numb; I could not hear a goddamn thing. It was a good sort of deaf, though. And although I was drenched in sweat (among other things) and had a dry throat, a bruised knee, and sore feet. It was the best feeling in the world.





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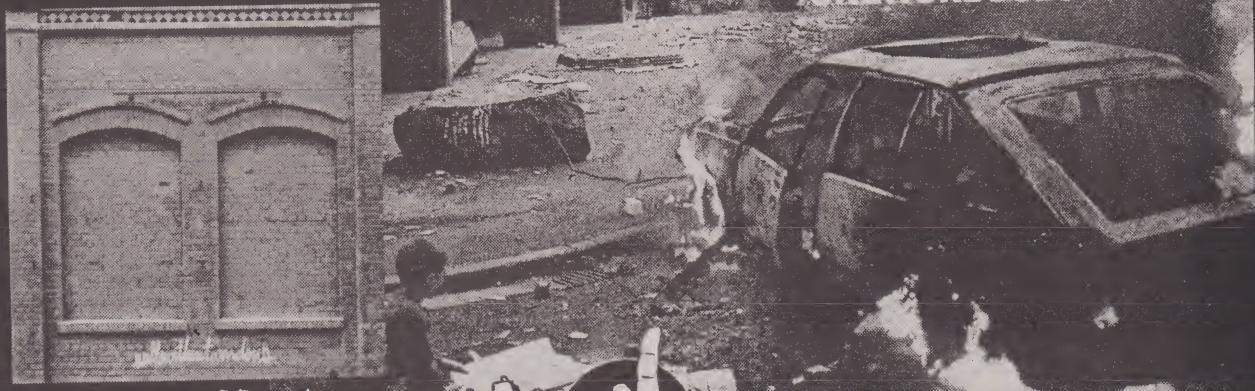
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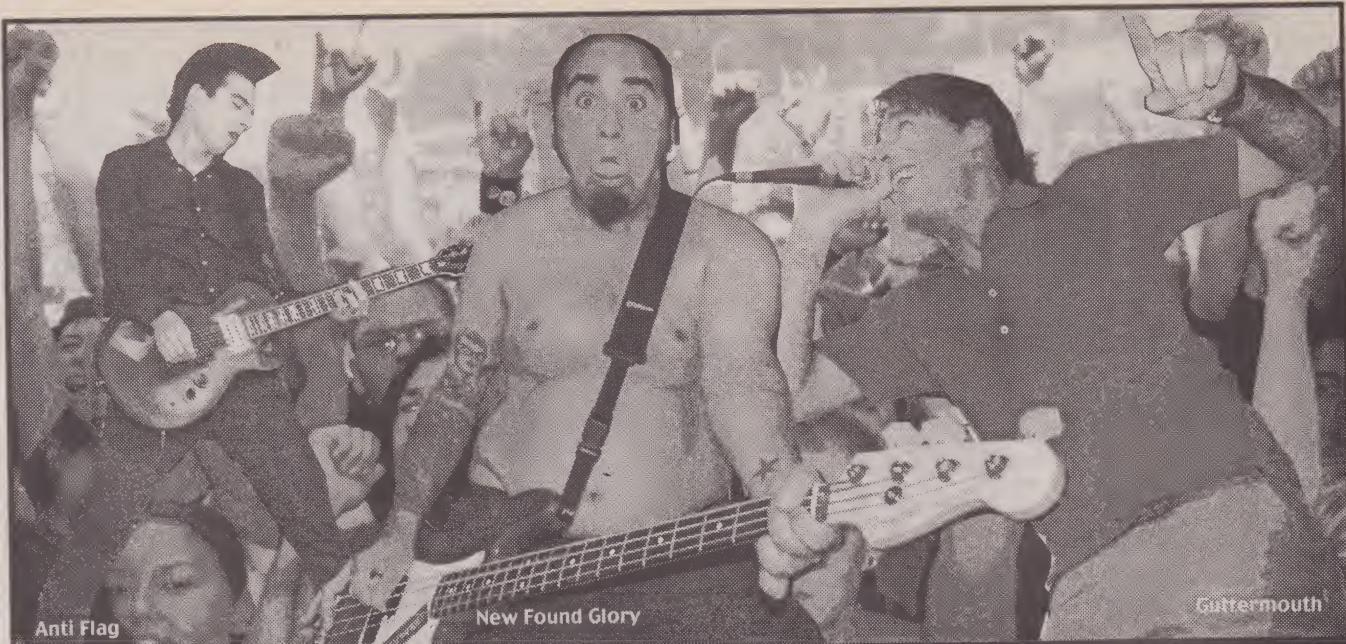


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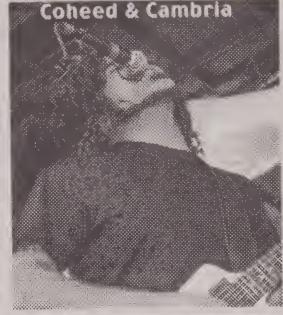
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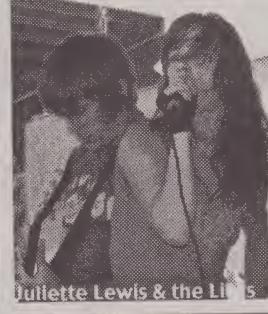
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The Dilluns



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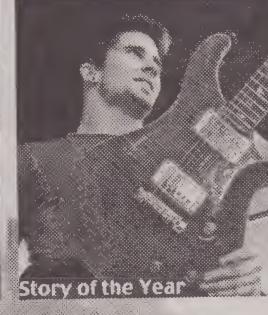
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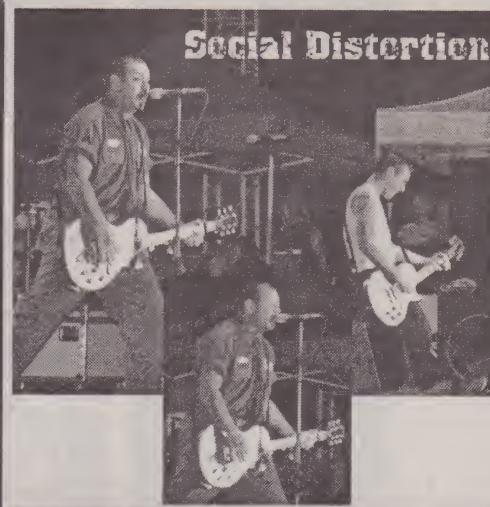
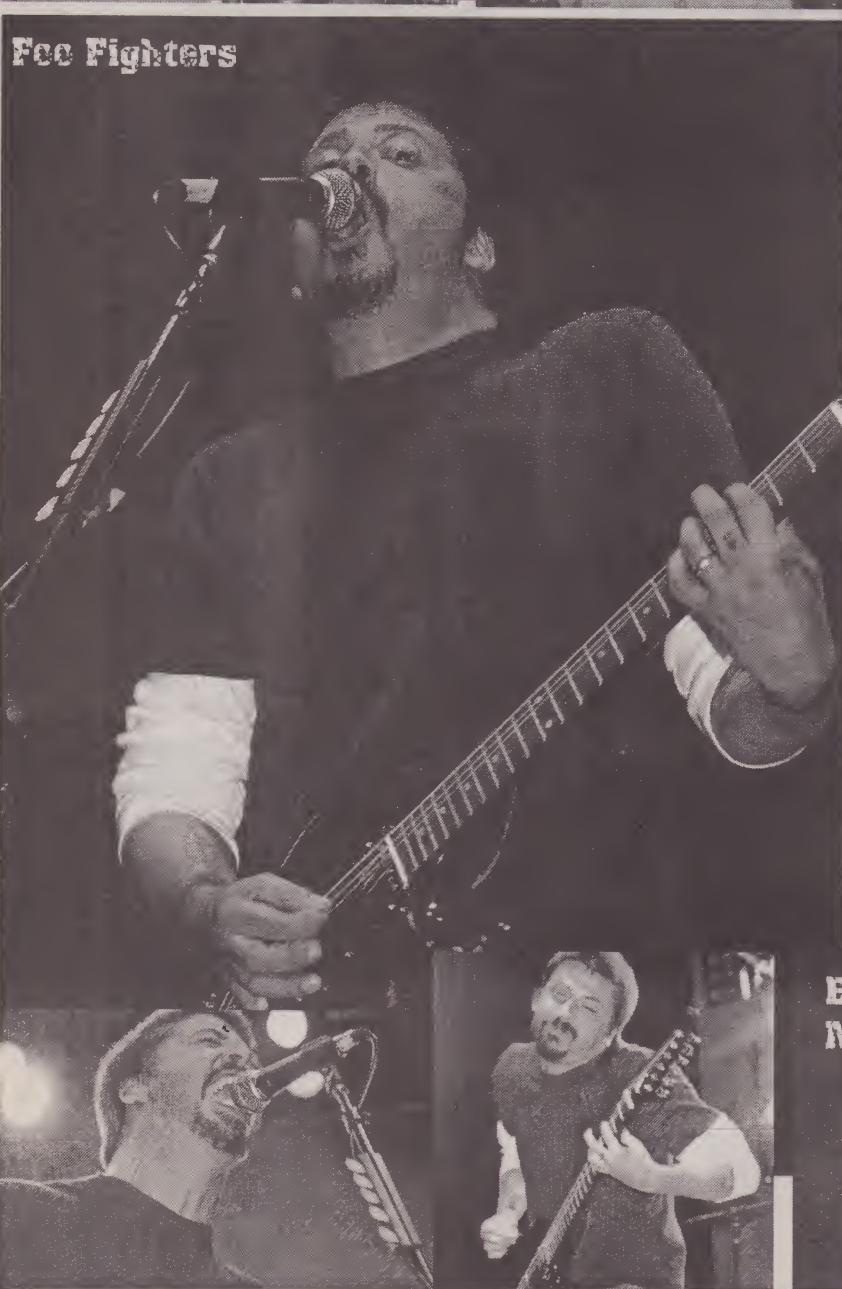
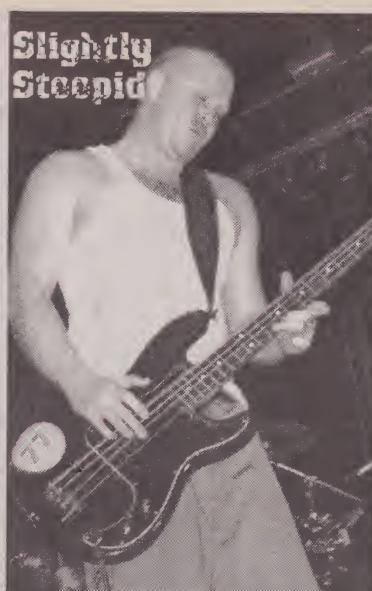
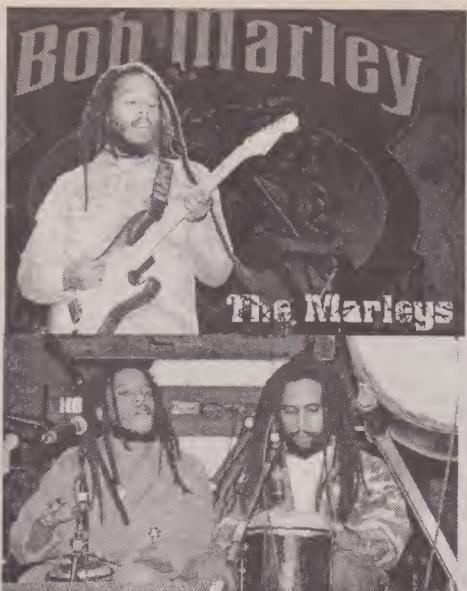


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where do they come up with this crap?



ACONITE THRILL THE RECLINER MIGHTY ATOM

Miraculously managing to avoid ANY over-used trends in the increasingly tired math-metal genre, Acronite Thrill bend, shape, and restructure this mould in such a refreshingly disparate way that it sets them miles apart from most other hopefuls on the circuit. Comprised of five equally creative individuals, it's a style that meshes together some spectacular non-screaming vocals from bespectacled frontman Will with a frantically erratic feel that jerks and jolts like a geriatric on a roller-coaster. But at times it can get a little much, as their guitarists jostle for attention over Will's contagious melodies, leaving some of these tracks a little too disjointed in parts. Maybe if they compromised their rhythmic syncopation for a little more structure things might have clicked a little more. However, those who are looking for a fresh take on the whole math-core thing should still check out some mp3s on their site.

-Mathew Hocking



AGATHODAIMON SERPENT S EMBRACE NUCLEAR BLAST

Agathodaimon has consistently released hard-hitting collections of black metal for years now. Their newest release, SERPENT S EMBRACE, is a perfect example of well-written metal with enough keyboards to keep it interesting but enough raw power to keep you banging your head. The title track and Solitude seem to be the standout tracks. Fans of Dimmu Borgir and Dark Tranquillity should definitely run down to the record store and pick this one up.

-Hibb



A IS JUMP MY ICE-FINGERED GHOST FUTURE APPLETREE RECORDS

A sparkly, artsy vibe is what comes across with A is Jump's MY ICE-FINGERED GHOST. With light percussion, cool/airy guitars, soft vocals, and touchy electronics, there's a relaxed atmosphere that makes its way through the album. Everglade is a good example, where the off-kilter rhythm combines with high-pitched keyboard and echo guitar. Maybe hailing from Iowa (home state to this band) doesn't mean you have to be pissed about it. Let's ask Slipknot.

-Darren Ratner



ALASTAIR MOOK LET IT GO INDEPENDENT RELEASE

AMERICANA! Aside from having a unique name, Mr. Alastair Mook has created an incredible contemporary folk/roots rock album. Lyrical highlight of the album is as follows: I like to play the hoes, but I'm done before they go. This now gets as much rotation in my car as my Neil Young and Bob Dylan records. As my British friend would say, It's bloody brilliant! Soothing guitar backed by great vocals makes for one stellar modern folk record. Go buy it!

-ADF



ANODYNE LIFETIME OF GRAY SKIES LEVEL PLANE

Creeping from the NYC underground, Anodyne's latest release showcases tons of muscular riffs and frenetic arrangements. Merging the attitude of Helmet and Unsane with the musical stealth of Candiria and Burnt by the Sun, this Brooklyn-based trio will deluge your ears with an impenetrable wall of sound. Tunes like the driving and dissonant chug of In the Desert Sound Proceeds Light and the comically-titled yet inquisitive A Mind is a Terrible Thing are as effective as a punch with brass knuckles to the jaw: impact is quick, and the results are staggering. If you dig Mastodon and Today Is the Day, LIFETIME OF GRAY SKIES would be worth checking out.

-Mike SOS



ANTAGONIST ESCHATOLOGY (SAMPLES) SELF-PRODUCED

You're a prima ballerina on a Sunday afternoon / Changing to the Wolfman howlin' at the moon. David Johansson sang that in 1973, and the condition described fits Antagonist perfectly: personality crisis. With a sound that alternates between whatever group of neo-emo indie fuckers will be popular next week and whatever crusty grind band that will never be, Antagonist works on an interesting aesthetic: a little of both, not enough of either. It's like The Get Up Kids picking a fight with The Black Dahlia Murder over who gets the last Killswitch Engage ticket. With better production (or any production) these Whittier, CA, kids might just become your girlfriend's favorite band. But, alas, Antagonist (who've been around since '98) seems committed to DIY, which, while not exactly chic these days, is respectable. And fuck all labels: integrity is still cool.

-jck.



A PERFECT MURDER UNBROKEN VICTORY

A Perfect Murder is a metalcore outfit whose 13-track release is laden with the kind of unbridled fury and metallic might that fits right in amongst the Ozzfest crowd. This Canadian quintet has garnished a slew of comparisons, as influences from Entombed to Down to Earth Crisis (whose singer, Karl Buechner, guests on UNBROKEN) are very much apparent. While APM isn't one of the most innovative bands on the circuit, the sheer power wielded on such cuts as Speak without Faith and the stoner-esque power groove of Die with Regret leave indelible marks both in your head and on your back. With a heavy hand in both the stoner and metalcore genres, APM's lethal combination sounds like a doped-up Hatebreed or a really pissed-off version of Crowbar both dangerous entities.

-Mike SOS



A-SET ADELINE MOON LUMINAL RECORDS

Having formed in Chicago back in '98, A-Set is the brainchild of Albert Menduno and is rooted in roots rock jamming and vintage styled ballads. After numerous lineup changes A-Set has paired down to a trio and beefed up their decidedly lo-fi approach without losing any of the hard hitting lyrics and toe tapping rhythms. Highlights include the blues based rocker Two of Hearts and the folksy Tennessee Sunset.

-Jude Ruiz

wannabe reviewer: Erika



DESCRIPTION OF HOW I EAT: smorgasbord
WHAT I CAN DO WITH MY MOUTH: rip, break, mold, smile and make others do the same.
I TRY TO ALWAYS: prevent the preventable and not be an idiot.



ALL ELSE FAILED THIS NEVER HAPPENED ABACUS RECORDINGS

According to the PR for this album, you better brace yourself for a thrilling combo blending the likes of the Psychedelic Furs or Joy Division to Slayer or Anthrax. Now, with an introduction like that, whose curiosity would not be piqued? In the end, it's a good thing that they set expectations like that to keep you curious, because curiosity is the only motivation to sit through this entire album. It's loud, it's thick, it's really freakin' long, and I swear I heard a chainsaw or similar power tool. Disparate influences or not, the end product here is just more of the same ole metalcore ramblings.

-Erika Owens



BABY STRANGE PUT OUT PRIMARY VOLTAGE

Baby Strange has an electrifying energy driven by their garage rock and angst-ridden vocals of Eric Deneen that echo back to Van Morrison at his most throaty. Jingle-jangle guitar melodies, a strong rhythm section, and hard-hitting bass thumping hit hard at the start of the album with the title track. However, their formula offers no new developments throughout the album. Without any creative searching, the album falls a little flat to those looking for something more of an individual noise.

-Norberto Gomez, Jr.



ANAM CARA S/T STRIKE FIRST RECORDS

Anam Cara sound like an updated version of what Overcome were doing during the middle of their existence. Relying on a shredding vocal attack with guitars that complement each other well, you can expect fans of anything that Face/Down and/or Solid State releases to be all over this release. For being presented with such a simple package, it took me by surprise that this was even tolerable, but this might actually warrant a second listen. I like the doses of melody that are interspersed throughout their EP. While it gets repetitive, I can see many getting behind what this band does. (It also features the original guitarist of Underoath)

-Ray Harkins



BALISTICA THE JUNGLE SCIENCE EP SELF-RELEASED

Strong synth melodies and beats are the high point of Balistica's THE JUNGLE SCIENCE EP, which is a successful blend of electro-punk/funk (phunk?). A little less obvious with the songwriting and more fierce exploration would help the use of samples and electronics to have a larger impact on the listener. Balistica's attempt at being cute in Racer is an utter failure giving them a horrible 80s/Blink 18-like mutant baby of Satan himself. In other words, very unappealing. Jungle Science itself sounds like a rip-off of Soul Coughing, except not good. There is still a lot of maturity lacking, but it is an EP, after all. It can get better. Right?

-Norberto Gomez, Jr.

music that rocks is better than great sex.



BEHIVE & THE BARRACUDAS
COCK READY
DOLLAR RECORD RECORDS

Having always heard nothing but praise for this band not to mention the fact that it includes members of Rocket From the Crypt and The Peechees I must admit to feeling a bit cheated after hearing this. All snotty swagger but with very little to say, COCK READY plays exactly like an Icarus Line live show. I understand and appreciate what they're trying to do, but that doesn't mean I want to listen to it. Considering that the liner notes state that this is a reissue of the band's earliest recordings, I'll cut them some slack. If this is indeed the case, COCK READY stands as a testament to how humble some bands' beginnings are.

-Matthew Siblo



BILL SANTEN
IN THE NIGHT KITCHEN
SWEATIN BETTY RECORDS

The debut solo release from ex-Birddog frontman Bill Santen is a pleasant collection of acoustic tunes that draw their strength from his clever lyrics and prophetic phrasing. The eight songs on this rather long EP reflect some good pop sensibilities mixed with the type of subject matter that freezes the listener in rapt attention. Fans of Matt Costa and vintage Donovan will love this release. Santen finances much of his recording time with proceeds from his artwork. The eerie photo of Santen in front of a blood-drenched, vintage refrigerator on the back cover is a good example of how his uncompromising appreciation for art pushes his music to a different level.

-DUG



BLOODLINE CALLIGRAPHY
THE BEGINNING OF THE END
STRIKEFIRST RECORDS

If there were a hardcore as heck contest at Cornerstone, Bloodline Calligraphy would be clamoring contenders. The name, the label, the thank-yous there are no surprises. Super derivative Christ-core in full Midwest effect. Hardcore being repetitive and boring is no surprise, but where Bloodline set themselves apart is with their words. At first glance, they are pretty funny, with titles like

Trying to Collect Child Support from Ghostdad, but the fact that the songs are composed of some of the most trite lyrics possible e.g., And I can make you happy, too and are punctuated by an explanation of their absurdly obvious meaning is unforgivable. In case you are interested in screaming along to a second-graders notes, check blcmosh.com for more hxc hysteria.

-Erika Owens



BULLETS AND OCTANE
THE REVELRY
CRITERION RECORDS

The fact that Gilby Clarke of Guns N' Roses fame produced this album is almost enough for me to want it. The lead singer of this band sounds like a hybrid of Scott Weiland, Mike Ness, Greg Graffin, and the guy from HIM, the Scott Weiland resemblance being the most prevalent (though it seems to depend on the tempo and song arrangement). Since Bullets and Octane have an engaging frontman, it's only natural to get drawn into their music. Once you give the music a chance, you'll realize Bullets and Octane deliver in the music category, as well. Great lyrics, great vocals, full-throttle guitars these are all elements that make this a very good band that blends rock music with unapologetic punk rock.

-Dane Jackson



CHAINS IN THE SHED
SELF-TITLED
SILOH RECORDS

The debut solo release by West Virginia's Nathan Daniel Limbaugh is a thoughtful, slow-rocking tribute to whitewater rafters everywhere. The album art pays more of an homage to Limbaugh's beautiful rafting visions than to the actual theme of the CD, which might better be termed *carpe diem*, or even seize the day before you're dead. As with most one-man bands, the artist's weak spots become apparent rather quickly. Limbaugh has a good hand for writing songs, but his bass- and drum-heavy tunes run out of steam quickly with the lack of any lead guitar. Nobody expects a musician to be able to play every instrument well, but if Limbaugh isn't able to learn some rudimentary lead riffs to spice things up, he might want to invest in a set of keyboards for variety.

-DUG



CHRONIC FUTURE
LINES IN MY FACE
INTERSCOPE

You may have caught the snazzy video for Time and Time Again on MTV, as this hybrid band has had quite the auspicious debut. Upon first listen, though, Chronic Future sounds like yet another bad version of rap rock. But when digging a little deeper into this Arizona quartet's debut release, a lot more than just a generic, played-out style is showcased. Surprisingly, there's a decent pop-punk band. In All American Rejects underneath the Eminem-meets-Ludacris lead vocals, and there's even shades of modern alternative rock in Hoobastank and The Used here on tracks like Thank You. Sounding like an updated, more street-credible version of Sugar Ray, high-schoolers who frequent the malls of America should eat LINES IN MY FACE UP, as it mixes the best of MTV's TRL into a digestible package suitable for mass-marketing success.

-Mike SOS



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COPELAND
KNOW NOTHING STAYS THE SAME EP
THE MILITIA GROUP

Copeland was burgeoning indie label The Militia Group's sweethearts last year. Their debut album swept the scene and won over mass amounts of fans. Needless to say, there has been a lot of anticipation for new material from these four Southern boys. So, even though the five-track EP of covers is amazing, it just doesn't quite satisfy our Copeland needs. **KNOW NOTHING STAYS THE SAME** features five covers of very appropriate classics done with just enough Copeland twist to add some spice. Even though the disc will read as 99 tracks long, there are only five whole tracks and a secret song amidst the other 94. Good luck trying to find it. And good luck being patient for more Copeland. I know I am going to have a hard time. www.themilitiagroup.com

-tChow



CONVERGE
YOU FAIL ME
EPITAPH RECORDS

Who does not know Converge? Providing one of the richest musical histories in hardcore today, Converge made the jump that everyone was not expecting to the largest independent record label in the punk world, Epitaph. This will be on the lists of every music fan, critic and casual listener alike, as it encompasses such a wide range of sounds, from intense bursts of passionate vocals to the most mind-boggling time signatures. Converge continue to astound and perplex the mass audience by topping each previous record. This is the main reason that many of us got into heavy music and rightfully so, as Converge continue to reinvent themselves and push boundaries many bands would never dare venture near.

-Ray Harkins



COUNT OF FOUR
STANDING ON THE CORNER

This just may be the hardest thing I've ever had to listen to, therefore putting me in the awkward position of having to slam 12 & 13 year old kids. Now in no way am I trying to discourage youngsters from picking up an instrument and strumming along to their favorite tunes but this record sounds amateur at best. This album evokes the image of three prepubescent children daydreaming of being rock stars. I'm sure these kids are real popular at their school and perhaps in due time they will manage to make some mildly interesting music or at the very least turn out to be as handsome as those boys from Hanson. Until then you could live a fulfilling life without ever having heard this.

-Jude Ruiz



CRADLE OF FILTH
SONGS FROM NYMPHETAMINE
ROADRUNNER

Cradle of Filth are one of the longest-running yet misunderstood metal acts in the world today. Finding a home on Roadrunner after a decade of label-hopping, the latest installment of depraved majesty and horrifically powerful headbanging music is still long on the dramatic, yet there's a sense of violence displayed on tracks like *Gilded Cunt* that's previously unheard from these merchants of evil. Like any well-respected black-metal band, the surge of evil is very much apparent, as are the seething riffs and bruising rhythms that made COF the underground entity that they are today. Maybe being on a pure metal label will help this band realize its full potential and give the band the mainstream recognition they richly deserve even if the sight and sound of this band will scare your siblings, neighbors, and whole damn community to death.

-Mike SOS



CREAM ABDUL BABAR
EXCAVATION 1995-1998
PUBLIC GUILT

Even though this Florida septet's name is pretty silly, there's nothing comical about its musical onslaught. This collection is a twin-CD package, digging up all of the group's out-of-print material for a convenient one-stop shop. Cream Abdul Babar's decade-long lifespan has been considerably successful when you factor that they are, by far, one of the most odd heavy bands on the scene. What else would you expect an outfit with a trombonist that plays hardcore? How about some noisy, catchy songs like *Shithead* that play like surf rock gone awry? And with songs with names Jennifer Aniston's *Pussy* and ...And *Afterwards There's Cake*, be prepared for a slab of humor inside of the musical madness, almost as if *Rockets from the Crypt*, *Faith No More*, and *Unsane* merged into one giant supergroup like *Parliament Funkadelic*. For those who enjoy a challenge, check out this band's early work.

-Mike SOS



CROSSFADE
SELF-TITLED
FG/COLUMBIA

Excuse me if I get my back hairs up at bands that sound exactly like Nickelback and use the same producer, but I was pretty apprehensive listening to the debut from South Carolina's Crossfade. Really, does the world need another band that sounds like this? That yeeeeeah vocal style that every Eddie Vedder-acting motherfucker has used since the late 90s, the same tired new radio guitar riffs and the diary-pilfered lyrics it all adds up to a load of shit. Naw, man, I ain't giving this one any more of my time.

-Jason Schreurs

I'm so tired of the generic shite out lately.

DESPERATE MEASURES NEVER ENOUGH TIME YOUNGBLOOD RECORDS

While it's not as good as bands like Good Riddance, Sick of It All, and Only Crime, Desperate Measures sound is very similar to the bands listed previously. What makes Desperate Measures worth more than one listen is the lyrics. After reading along with the music, you'll find yourself relating to a lot of the situations outlined therein. It's almost therapeutic and cathartic. Besides that, the album also points out repeatedly not to waste your time here on Earth. This is a very solid hardcore album with great lyrics. Give these guys a few more years and they might be on the same level as the bands they probably model themselves after.

-Dane Jackson



DRAW SIMPLE TO SEVERE EMPIRE RECORDS

Proving once more that Scotland is the place to look for deeply affecting, down-tempo indie music, Draw are a band combining the soulful burden of Travis with the grace of The Byrds to create an expressive, mouth-watering formula that begs for the kind of adoration only 2000 gushing, screaming fans can give. While Silver Screen gently rocks their boat of dreamy anachorism, the odd track like Subject Surfer throws in a bit of tempora mentality that makes the whole listening experience so stirring. Indeed, quite why Draw haven't been eagerly snapped up by a major label in a counterattack to those deeply depressing indie cherubs Keane is frankly baffling; but if the strength of their songs can continue, then their future looks very bright indeed.

-Mathew Hocking



DREAMEND AS IF BY GHOSTS GRAVEFACE RECORDS

AS IF BY GHOSTS, the second full-length release from Chicago's most unassuming post-rock trio is not one that you will easily forget (if you can find a copy). The packaging is among the most original in recent memory: each CD comes with a unique antique photograph framed by the cardboard case, as well as a page of THE JEWISH HISTORY and an unidentifiable negative of a second photograph. The music contained inside has all the makings of a typical indie-rock trio, yet meanders and sways with a clumsy shoegazing grace through the ground broken by Mogwai, The Dirty Three, and Godspeed You Black Emperor!, breaking waves of light and dark and folding gray into something more than just a sigh. GHOSTS is a work of art on many different levels and if you use it right, it can get you laid.

-JZK.



EACH PASSING MOMENT LET HER SLEEP NO MORE FORSAKEN RECORDINGS

Lately, North Carolina has been churning out a large amount of highly original and inspiring bands that are making their mark on independent music. Bands like Beloved, Between the Buried and Me, and Glass Casket are all pushing the boundaries of the perception of North Carolina metal hardcore. With an influx of successful bands, you are always bound to find the bands clinging for dear life so as not to be lost in the sea of music. Each Passing Moment seem to be one of those bands which I think works in their favor, as you can sense urgency behind their work. Unfortunately, too many bands have similar qualities as this band...and pull them off better. The Each Passing Moment boys are technically sound in their songwriting and executing, but the originality factor ranks somewhat low. Only determination will show the true colors of this band.

-Ray Harkins



ENDICOTT THE WORDS IN INK DON T LIE EQUAL VISION

Endicott's newest, 12-track release is one of the most ambitious underground efforts thus far this year, both lyrically and conceptually. Explosive punk with hints of hardcore delivery, the album's point of view switches throughout the entire disc, detailing the story of an abduction via the perspective of victim, abductor, and the victim's family, making Endicott's offering one of the most stark topics for a concept album.

Despite the initial confusion, what holds THE WORDS IN INK DON T LIE firmly in place with unraveling into a sonic and logistic disaster are the quintet's penchant for rhythmic solidarity (la fellow upstate NYers like Snapcase and Coheed and Cambria), as well as the innate ability to tug at the heartstrings, especially during the atmospheric gut wrench of Holding Cell or through the swirling feedback of Southbound. For an endearing yet disturbing listening experience that surpasses the normal punk-rock album's limits, check it out.

-Mike SOS



EPIC HERO NEW LIFE SELF-RELEASED

The only thing worse than a band that sounds like a cross between Nickelback and Three Doors Down is wait there's nothing worse than a band that sounds like a cross between Nickelback and Three Doors Down. These dudes didn't know; they seem to have been all about the idea. Listen, 7 million sub-genres of independent music don't exist because people want to hear more color-by-number pseudo-rock. This is what fans of Barenaked Ladies listen to when they feel like being adventurous and expanding their horizons. NEW LIFE is Christian rock minus the Christian rock, if you catch my drift. When your stepdad drags you along to his employer's summer picnic, this is the band that shows up, plays three Candlebox covers, and asks to be paid in hotdogs. In fact, this CD has inspired me to stop reviewing albums for SKRATCH altogether. Fuck it. I quit.

-Dave Kargol



EVEN THE ODD POPULAR AMONG VAN OWNERS WRONG

Hailing from a small Michigan town, the snarling 11-track release by Even the Odd is a potent shot to the realm of today's version of hard rock. With some 80s cock-rock bravado backing the pounding rhythms on such tracks as Hey Hey and Broken Gun, the fury of Monster Magnet meet the hooks of Love/Hate for a rock n roll experience sans excessive posing and pissing and moaning. Mixing the moodiness of grunge, the stripped-down sound of garage, and the sneering of punk rock, tracks like Mothra and Burn It Down highlight the band's penchant for keeping the spirit of rock n roll a riff-happy, rhythmically supercharged endeavor.

-Mike SOS



EWIGKEIT RADIO IXTLAN EARACHE

Looking for a complete diversion from your average death metal endeavor? Then look no further than the cosmic chaos caused by the multi-talented Mr. Fog and his project, Ewigkeit. This progressive excursion from the typical grinding sound of death metal has its feet way off the ground and into another universe, as the band's name (German for eternity) suggests. Much like fellow multi-tasker Devin Townsend, Mr. Fog plays most of the instruments himself and carries a unique vision to heavy music that encompasses everything from Pink Floyd to KMFDM to Opeth often in the same song. Tracks like the folk-metal stomp of Strange Volk and the doom-laden dance rock of esc. are just some of the more eclectic examples from this pioneering piece of work. RADIO IXTLAN contains nine ambitious tracks that combine synthesizers, shred guitars, and a slew of samples to create its own musical realm where rave meets death metal at a space-rock showcase. For those stuck in a metal rut, become unbound by the sounds of Ewigkeit.

-Mike SOS



FAIRMONT ANOMIE REINFORCEMENT RECORDS

Fairmont are a quartet out of New Jersey that blend indie (True Love Waits), emo (Artemis), punk (Hello Kitty), and folk (Burn the Churches) with a bubblegum pop feel that falls somewhere between The Weakerthins and Barenaked Ladies. As the bands website informs you, this is Fairmont's best work to date, however there is still room for improvement. One thing is for certain, that (whether you like it or not) these songs will find a way to linger around in your brain for awhile, provided you have one.

-Jude Ruiz



FOREVER IS FORGOTTEN DYING BEAUTIFUL THORP

On the chaotic side of metal, there are a slew of bands today trying to outcompete each other and make the most intricate yet ballistic music on the scene. Add Milwaukee's Forever is Forgotten to that list, as this quintet pummel with relentless riffs and thunderous rhythms. But, like so many of its peers, there's a lot of technical excellence underneath the schizophrenic sonic output that makes this re-release so appealing. If you enjoy bands like Candiria, Shai Halud, and Between the Buried and Me, then DYING BEAUTIFUL is worth the purchase.

-Mike SOS



FUN PEOPLE THE ART(E) OF ROMANCE LITTLE DEPUTY RECORDS

Just how fun are these Fun People, you ask? Well, if their music is any indication, I'd say pretty damn fucking fun. Argentina's Fun People bust out some short and sweet, energetic English/Spanish fusion of punk, 80s pop, surf, hardcore, and bolero mixed with political views that have earned Fun People a reputation as being Argentina's Fugazi. This is Fun People's first domestic release, is produced by Steve Albini, and showcases how this band can morph into different genres faster than you can say Caf Tacuba. The real question here is: Is there anything this band can't do? funpeople.com.ao.

-Jude Ruiz



FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND CASUALLY DRESSED AND DEEP IN CONVERSATION FERRET

There's a huge buzz surrounding Funeral for a Friend and with good reason. This Welsh quintet has turned the U.K. scene on its ear with their special blend of emo, metal, and hardcore. Now it's time to conquer the good old U.S.A., and the band seems poised to do just that. On the outfit's first full-length collection, the 12-track CASUALLY DRESSED AND DEEP IN CONVERSATION, the band's distinctive essence is remarkably captured, thanks to the stupendous knob-twiddling of metal monger Colin Richardson. FFAF morphs gracefully from hulking behemoths to fragile love mongers, as tracks like the cascading and stunning Juneau, the arena-rock strut of Escape Artists Never Die, and the dynamic bursts found in Red is the New Black aptly showcase. Drawing comparisons to fellow countrymen Lostprophets, both groups play with similar conviction and passion and employ many of the same influences. By taking metallic guitar antics, sturdy hardcore rhythms, and topping it off with the fervor of every emo frontman that matters, Funeral for a Friend have laid out the template for today's rockers to follow, making the listener feel every heartfelt cry and pulsating guitar riff. Easily one of the best albums thus far this year.

-Mike SOS

music that rocks is better than great sex.



GASOLINE PLEASE
EP
PHANTOMS RECORDS

This brief offering opens with *Swell*, a rather old-fashioned word perfectly representative of Gasoline Please's nostalgic sound. They don't go back to the 50s, but they do harken back to the progenitors of the emo movement. Low production quality adds to that mystique, but the emphasis on impassioned singing and driving beats instead of just screaming and shredding separates Gasoline from the current tenor of the genre. They fill the EP with four tracks that sound snatched from time and two live renditions that showcase the messy, noisy, screamy angle that dominates emo of any era. *Miss Intervention* best typifies their energy and kinetic abilities, complete with the timeless assistance of a tambourine old and new all in one.

-Erika Owens



GATSBY'S AMERICAN DREAM
IN THE LAND OF LOST MONSTERS EP
LLR

There was a lot of hype over *Gatsby's* when they first burst onto the scene. Straight out of Seattle, their edgy math-rock sound truly blew everyone away. Since then, there has been another full-length, and now an EP. This EP definitely shows evolution since their first album. Less harsh and more approachable is the sound of this seven-track disc. In my eyes, it is the vocalist and the cleverness of the band that truly adds uniqueness. It sets the band apart, even if their music wasn't fresh enough to do so by itself. If you weren't necessarily won over by the band's other two albums, still give this EP a healthy shot, because it just might be a turning point for you and *Gatsby's American Dream*. www.gatsbysamericandream.com

-tChow



GARY WILSON
MARY HAD BROWN HAIR
STONES THROW

Gary Wilson was making sub-hip, electro-pop cult music in 1977, and he's still doing it. Better than Jandek and more transparently psychological than Daniel Johnston, Wilson's new album of lo-fi electro-funk is his first since the late 70s. Some things never change, and Wilson is still obsessed with the real or imagined lost loves Mary, Linda, and Debbie. *MARY HAD BROWN HAIR* is destined to be a classic.

-Tom Tearaway Schulte



GBH
CRUEL & UNUSUAL
IDOL RECORDS

This most recent release from GBH is a collection of cover songs from bands like The Lurkers, Billyclub, and The Rezillos, as well as live recordings. The songs *No* and *I'm On Heat* were recorded in 1987, and *Last of the Teenage Idols* was recorded in 1989. These three songs are actually some of the better songs on the album. *No* is my favorite track. The tracks *Freak*, *Time Bomb*, *Drugs Party in 526*, and *Give Me Fire* were recorded live at the Cockpit in Leeds, England, in 2002. The live portion of the CD displays what it is like to see the band play live with all their energy, attitude, and speed. This album is a nice edition for any GBH and punk-rock fan, as it contains both new and old recordings.

-Jennifer Moncayo



wannabe reviewer: Jennifer Moncayo

DESCRIPTION OF HOW I EAT: like a human
WHAT I CAN DO WITH MY MOUTH: none of your business
I TRY TO ALWAYS: brush my teeth more than twice a day



INSTRUCTION
S/T
GEFFEN

Instruction is a rock band that plays fast and loud music the caliber of Linkin Park's. The vocals are similar to Disturbed, with a low but loud voice and also high-pitched screaming. Theirs has a more modern, mellow indie-rock sound, with very powerful vocals similar to Creed and The Deftones. Their music has range and seems like it will do well once it is put out in the mainstream. And they have been picked up by Geffen Records, so I'm sure they will become one of those many bands that are played on way too many radio stations way too often, as their music is probably palatable to many audiences.

-Jennifer Moncayo



GEISHA GIRLS
S/T
JSR RECORDS

Alright kids, time to say hello to your new favorite band. Geisha Girls (ironically are not girls at all, rather three guys based out of Costa Mesa, CA) are caught in a beautiful time warp of Brit-flavored late 70s/early 80s post-punk driven madness. Traces of Public Image Limited, Gang of Four, A Certain Ratio, and even a bit of The Cure or Violent Femmes can be heard throughout. This four track EP is littered with infectious bass lines, choppy guitars, and pulsating drums that'll get you off your lazy ass. This is sold as a 45rpm and can be purchased through the band directly at geishabooking@hotmail.com or at Vinyl Solution in Huntington Beach, CA.

-Jude Ruiz



GONGA
GONGA
TEE PEE RECORDS

Gonga reminds me a lot of Black Sabbath. They have a heavy sound, but they have a definite groove, too. They were discovered by Geoff Barrow from Portishead, and I can also hear some elements of that, as if Portishead and Black Sabbath collaborated. But the majority of their songs are reaching past the seven-minute mark, and I have ADD and can't handle it, and I flip out so who knows how the songs end? But they start off pretty well. If you have the attention span of a saint, then maybe you should check them out.

-chad



GRANT OLNEY
BROKEDOWN GOSPEL
ASIAN MAN RECORDS

Austin, TX has its share of the poor, lost, vagrants living among the rubble of the cold cement. Unlike the thousands who walk the streets and fail to consider the lives that hang perilously on a daily basis, Grant Olney chooses to recognize these less-fortunate in an attempt to wake himself from the numbness before it encompasses his soul. *BROKEDOWN GOSPEL* is an album that remembers the forgotten and accepts the thin line drawn between good and bad luck. No one is immune. Olney croons through folk, jazz, pop, and rock songs mixed with his distinct vocals (which resemble Jarvis Cocker of Pulp).

-Norberto Gomez, Jr.



GREENHAVEN
SOUTHBOUND SINGLE
HUMBLE RECORDINGS

Who out there can still remember their junior-high/high-school metalhead friends? They were the quiet, polite, and generally larger fellows who didn't really seem to care about anything, as long you left them alone when they wanted you to. Sometimes they'd even scare away larger, more intimidating gentleman coming to harass you and to thank them, on occasion you would attend a show or band practice of theirs. Those were the days you'd like to forget. Remember how predictably heavy and scary they were trying to sound but how they lacked the talent real metal bands have? That's Greenhaven. Not since the glory days of 1998 have I heard such juvenile, thoughtless music trying to be passed off as metal. These guys sound like a bunk collaboration of 90s-era Misfits and Drowning Pool. Randy Rhodes would NOT be pleased, gentlemen!

-Matthew Siblo



GU MEDICINE
GU MEDICINE
UNDERGROOVE

If you're wondering what the G stands for in GU Medicine, it's genital. And the U? Urinary. Put it all together, and you have a band with a worrying fascination with that most-feared of medical departments amongst the more promiscuous teens. So I guess it must seem strangely ironic then that a well-known female radio DJ should declare their heavy-thumping monster rock grooves better than sex. But with the sheer level of sleaze oozing from every pore, it's enough to tempt even Monster Magnet's buxom groupies from his suave clutches. As such, it's a powerful, wall-cracking debut that's much heavier than most of their stoner-rock contemporaries, particularly when the rumbling, red-eyed Corrosion of Conformity juice of *Red in the Obvious* spurts out all over you.

-Mathew Hocking



HALFWAY TO GONE
HALFWAY TO GONE
SMALL STONE

Halfway to Gone's adrenaline-filled 12-track release ensures a place in the annals of fist-pumping, bottle-breaking, mayhem-unleashing rock 'n' roll history, as tracks like Hammer's Fallin' grind with the abandon of a coked-up stripper, while the bluesy ball-breaking beat of *Good Friend* hearkens back to the days when Led Zep were in their prime. Armed with a ton of battleaxe riffs and amphetamine-powered attitude and blessed with instrumental gold, like the Nugent-meets-Blue Cheer anthem *His Name Was Leroy*, Halfway to Gone's third release puts them on the list as a soundtrack to take into the woods and get wrecked to while feeling up your girlfriend.

-Mike SOS



HANALEI
WE'RE ALL NATURAL DISASTERS
THICK RECORDS

The solo debut from ex-The Ghost guitarist Brian Moss is a subtle, breathtaking album that worms its way into your subconscious on the first listen. The sound is dominated by acoustic guitar and backed by electronic keyboards and programmable drums, yet it is Moss's soft, ethereal voice and poignant lyrics that tie this material together. More poetic than musical, the lyrics to the 12 songs on this album are as smart as they are memorable.

There's no rock 'n' roll here, just simple, beautiful melodies that move as smoothly as a canoe floating downstream in a quiet forest. Moss has pulled off one of the best solo albums I've ever heard.

-DUG

you look like a dumbass with headphones on.



HANOVER SAINTS
BLOOD, GUTS, & GLORY
FIRST STRIKE RECORDS

Hanover Saints have a raw and down-to-earth punk sound. Produced and put together well, this album offers plenty of attitude and punch to back up its tough talk, kind of like the mean guy at the end of the bar who can say whatever he wants because everyone knows he can kick their asses. But with songs like "New War Same War" and "Writing on the Wall", Hanover Saints show that they also offer style, emotion, and intelligence through their lyrics and music. Their eyes are open to the ugliness of the way the world works, and they aren't going to sugarcoat it.

-Thomas Murray



HATESPHERE
BALLET OF THE BRUTE
CENTURY MEDIA

Leave it to Century Media to sign blazing metal acts. Hatesphere are a Danish member of the Century Media family who have enough thrash and death-metal gusto going on to make themselves heard. *BALLET OF THE BRUTE* is a solid effort, with great rhythms and awesome power chords leading the way amongst catchy rhythms and scary vocals. It's not anything too different, but I did get a kick out of tracks such as "Vermin" and "Downward to Nothing", where it's simple headbanger bliss. Good stuff.

-Darren Ratner



HIT THE DECK
LOOK ALIVE
STRIKE FIRST RECORDS

Spirit-filled, straight-edge hardcore. With something as niche as this, one wonders how this band plans on spreading their message. Hit the Deck do just the trick and present their message with a no-frills, straightforward old-school hardcore attack. Back in the days of the circle pit, this band would sit at the head of the table with the other Knights of the Round Table, but they might just get overlooked with the focus shifting from traditional hardcore to the metal-tinted hardcore of today. Fans of Youth of Today, Champion, and Minor Threat will feel right at home with this record.

-Ray Harkins



HOT LIKE (A) ROBOT
HURRY UP AND DIE
CRITERION RECORDS

Here comes another weird band from San Diego. Hung Like (A) I mean, Hot Like (A) Robot provides its listeners with an array of indie guitar licks and weird, introspective lyrical bangs that make for an interesting mix. At times sounding a little on the Fugazi side, the band has a very indie/punk edge. If you're into bands like Christiansen and Fugazi, then check out this album.

-ADF



JOEY S LOSS
UNWELCOME TRAVELERS AND OTHER BRAVE MEN
INDIE VISION MUSIC RECORDS

From a musical standpoint, this record is very tight and easy to listen to. The only element acting as an anchor to this band is the lead vocalist. He lacks range and pitch, and because of his voice the album sounds monotone. The actual music is pop/metal-fused punk. The album is very similar to bands like MxPx and Slick Shoes, in the sense that they're all talented bands with Christian overtones. Once you get past the vocal lag, this is a very solid album.

-ADF



KIDS NEAR WATER
HEY ZEUS!
ABSTRACT

Though I'm loath to agree with the outlandish press-release statement proclaiming punk/hardcore/emo fans won't find a band as talented nor find an album so destined to click as Britain's Kids Near Water's first U.S. release, the 10-song *HEY ZEUS!* is good. The guys bring the rockabilly times mellow, at times full of aggression, sometimes both in one composition, but always well-played and (by the sound of it) sincere. Great and more abrasive tracks like the outstanding, rather disoriented-sounding "And We Were Lost" and "Token" recall the genius of Rites of Spring. The album overall is intense. KNW mix post-hardcore goodness with indie, emo, and screamo intermittently, in the vein of From Safety to Where's masterpiece *IRREVERSIBLE TREND*—especially in songs like the glorious opener "Bad Day Contest", which totally could've come off that record, as it's upbeat and full of feeling; and the by turns heavy and light "Forward Thinking". Impressive stuff.

-Janelle Jones



HOT CROSS
FAIR TRADES AND FAREWELLS
LEVEL PLANE

Hot Cross is an East Coast outfit whose latest, six-track endeavor challenges the listener to allow the band's potent juxtaposing of indie rock and post-hardcore to seep inside your system. With a staunch DIY approach (its label, Level Plane, is run by drummer Greg Drudy) and an expansive repertoire of D.C. hardcore, early SoCal punk, and NYC noisecore to choose from, Hot Cross keep your ears on their toes by throwing in tasty guitar licks and impassioned vocal melodies over frenetic rhythms, making sure that your full attention is paid. Captivating and thought provoking, fans of At the Drive-In, Fugazi, and any thinking man's hardcore outfit will soak this one up like a sponge.

-Mike SOS

A TASTE FOR MURDER
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HOT WATER MUSIC/ MORTIIS
THE NEW WHAT NEXT
EPITAPH

If you like Hot Water Music, THE NEW WHAT NEXT is going to be right up your alley. The album is filled with everything you've grown to love about the band, from the thought-provoking, gravelly vocals to the intricate musicianship. The production value on this recording is stellar, which makes the layered guitar textures that much more prominent. Some highlights include My Little Monkey Wrench and Bottomless Seas. There's a nice mix of mellow melodic songs and harder-edged melodic songs. I think it's safe to say that THE NEW WHAT NEXT is the band's best effort to date.

-Dane Jackson



IRRADIO
MAKE-UP FOR THE INAUGURATED
GREY FLIGHT RECORDS

The sophomore release from this San Diego-based quintet is an electrifying journey into the heart and soul of fusion. With roots in jazz, funk, rock, and hip-hop, the band turns indie rock on its head with its captivating, original style. The music on this disc is probably closest to a Cake-like vibe. The 10 songs burn with originality, and the production by Ben Moore (Drive Like Jehu, Rocket from the Crypt) puts the music in a league of its own. Huntington Beach's Grey Flight Records has a potential monster on its hands with this group. Grey Flight is offering most of their catalog at only eight bucks, so by all means search this one out. (And if you get the opportunity see this band live they have the heart and soul of champions.)

-DUG



JED WHITEY
MONGOLOID CAGE MATCH
MANIC RIDE

For a bunch of supposed retard, Jed Whitey rock, as evidenced on their debut full-length, MONGOLOID CAGE MATCH (now THAT's a scary thought). Fans of the old Epitaph sound will appreciate the speedy My Own Private Altamont; the extremely Pennywise-ish Are You Ready to Hate Us? (which kicks off the 10-song album); the ferocious Yes? No!; and the mean, hyper-intense, super-short finale We Used Your Record as a Beer Coaster. Meanwhile, on occasion the Australian band channel The Dead Boys with the tough and gritty rockers I'm OK You're Fucked, One Trick Pony, and I Am Spasticus. They also throw in a nice little cover of Devo's Uncontrollable Urge. Some good stuff going on here. Basically, the only moment on the entire record when the band falter is with the sub-par (and annoying) My Band Is Better than Your Band.

-Janelle Jones



JOHNNY RELIABLE
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
SELF-RELEASED

Well, congratulations are in order. I honestly believe that Johnny Reliable is the worst band I have ever heard in my entire life and believe me, that is saying a lot. I've heard some shit that would force a rational person to drive a screwdriver into their eardrums just to escape the noise they were being subjected to...but I'm saying Johnny Reliable is even worse than that, because just deafening myself isn't enough, because there still be a part of my memory that's been subjected to this. The thought terrifies me. They did send me a handwritten note (in pencil, no less) that says please review our album for your magazine. Well, here you go, guys!

-chad



JOSH KAMENSKY
SECOND STORY
SKY K STUDIOS

Sometimes you just have to feel bad. It is so clear that the person put a ton of time, money, and thought into producing this new musical extension of himself, yet it still somehow does not work. Josh tries to shake that pity. He employs various sounds, instruments, and supporting vocals, but he never overcomes that disconnect with the listener. All Your Wendys stands out amongst the muck by featuring a strong female singer who presents a beautiful contrast to the rest of the confused mass, but that highlight is not enough to alter the tone of the entire album. Earnest but unfocused, eclectic yet muddled, Josh tries to but just can't seem to find his own groove never mind one that the listener can appreciate.

-Erika Owens



KILLRADIO
RAISED ON WHIPPED CREAM
COLUMBIA

Killradio is probably in line to have a smash hit. RAISED ON WHIPPED CREAM is a super mid-tempo rock disc. The band has found that point where rock can be rippling and big and still be accessible. The light in the sky for Killradio is lead singer/lyricist/guitarist Brandon Jordan. The opening track, A.M.E.R.I.K.A., is by far the best, with its funky Jane's Addiction-like, relentless attack (No matter where I go / You're always there / Cause no matter where I sit, man / I sit in fear). Killradio is Jane's Addiction super light. To be accessible, the music must sound familiar, and RAISED ON WHIPPED CREAM sounds very familiar. That's the bad news. The good news is Killradio actually rock.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

when a cd is great, i get all giggly gay.

KILLING THEORY
DEAD, BURIED, FORGOTTEN
TRIBUNAL RECORDS.

If Killing Theory's DEAD, BURIED, FORGOTTEN could be summed up in two words, those words would be (in the ancient language of death metal) Pig Destroyer. John Nguyen's voice is just as raw as Jr. Hayes's vox, which means it's like a psycho zombie whose larynx is being ripped out as he sings. Killing Theory is full of cool time changes and amazing instrumentation all around. Killing Theory really have their shit together. DEAD, BURIED, FORGOTTEN is a five-song EP that's not for everyone, but if you like your corpses decapitated and eaten by the light of big rock amplifiers, Killing Theory is the cup of death for you.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



KULTUR SHOCK
KULTURA-DIKTATURA
KOOLARROW RECORDS

Gypsy sounds with a muscular, post-metal delivery makes this an interesting (if not challenging) release. Not for relaxation, the energetic album may best be appreciated by ears attuned to Western hard rock but raised on East European folk. (If you find this intriguing but not accessible enough, I recommend Mano Negra.) www.Koolarrows.com

-Tom Tearaway Schulte



LANDLORD
SELF-TITLED
SELF-RELEASED

This New York City trio has come up with a novel idea for its debut album: good songwriting, excellent production, and a heartfelt political message. Very few if any self-released CDs reach the quality exhibited on the 12 tracks from this release. With a sound that radiates between U2 and Midnight Oil, the band has found a late-80s groove that suits its material perfectly. Tunes like War Child, Revolution, and Politics pull no punches in the political arena and are some of the band's most passionate tunes. It's high time for this band to step up to an industry showcase gig and get signed.

-DUG



LORD STERLING
TODAY'S SONG FOR TOMORROW
SMALL STONE

When a band's instrumental arsenal includes Moog synthesizer, electric sitar, and a harmonium (whatever the hell that is), strap yourself in for a E ticket to Space Mountain, which you get courtesy of the New Jersey-based Lord Sterling. This quartet knows how to alter mood through sound, and the psychedelic aura of Password and late-60s arena-rock swagger of Tough Times for the Troubadours are just some of the stock sounds manipulated here for maximum output. Sprinkled with acid and deeply rooted in punk-rock history, Lord Sterling put a sense of majesty into its sneer and come up with a 10-track collection that will swirl in your head for hours on end after a few solid listens. Heavy, trippy, and ultimately satisfying.

-Mike SOS



THE LUCKY STIFFS
TODAY WILL FOLLOW YOU
FIVE RECORDS DIME

This isn't just another boring pop-punk band, this is an omni-punk band. In fact, this is the world's first and probably only omni-punk band (whatever that even means!). Apparently it implies an all-inclusive punk idea? I really don't understand. But this band is championing it, so I hope it works out for them. But first and foremost they should write some good songs, and then it would appear to be a more worthy cause. In all honesty, they're not as bad as, say, Good Charlotte.

-chad



MALIBU STACEY
ON HEAT
TOWNSEND RECORDS

I'm not sure if Terrorvision made much of a splash your side of the pond, but over here they were, once upon a time, our very own pop/rock treasures, creating bouncy, sing-along anthems with enough riff-wielding grit to grant them exposure in every rock club in the land. But that was THEN. Now, this side of the millennium, bassist Leigh Markiew has got his act together, formed another band, and re-strung his bass with a post-grunge twang, rocking the heck out with some huge, chunky riffs alongside some shaky Ash-cum-Stony Sleep vocals. It's an endearing album, for sure, and will no doubt appeal to fans of Terrorvision's glitter-grime troupe, (not to mention The Wildhearts' melodic hooks). But whether this will stay near my stereo for more than a few plays is somewhat doubtful.

-Mathew Hocking



MAY I REFUSE/ MRSFLETCHER
A SPLIT CD ~
PANC RECORDS

This is a split cd featuring three songs apiece from two new competent Italian emo/indie-rock bands. May I Refuse kicks off the disc with their most winning tune Wax House and close their set with the lazy and melancholic The Travel Song. Mrsfletcher doesn't quite match the charisma of their label mates, with only their opener I'm Coming There On January having a lasting effect. There's nothing groundbreaking going on here, but nothing embarrassing either, just a couple of hard working emo bands trying to globalize. See band sites for audio samples mrsfletcher.com or mayirefuse.net

-Jude Ruiz

www.skratchmagazine.com

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MINDGRINDER
MIND TECH
CANDLELIGHT

Norwegian noisemongers Mindgrinder have released a catastrophic display of aggression in the form of the outfit's debut, 10-track record. Containing all of the pummeling nuances of fellow Norwegian groups like Zylkon and Emperor, while combining heavily programmed and utterly disaster-ridden traces of bands like Fear Factory, MIND TECH's crushing riffs and incessant double-bass drumming are satisfactorily savage. Mindgrinder's sound of evil grinds on tracks like *Human Error* and slays on cuts like *Repulsive Evolution* in ways that any self-respecting extreme metal follower will enjoy endless hours of headbanging to.

-Mike SOS



MISCHIEF INVASION SOUNDTRACK
LIQUID 8 RECORDS

A soundtrack of hardcore industrial for a film based on a European street race, MISCHIEF INVASION is helmed by Fear Factory drummer Raymond Herrera. Much like Fear Factory's own material, this collection of songs goes absolutely nowhere except to blur the lines between nu-metal (e.g., Kom, Deftones) and guitar-driven industrial (e.g., new Ministry, Rammstein)...which is not very exciting or appealing. Those who have heard Fear Factory know what to expect from this soundtrack. However, for those interested in street racing, this high-octane, testosterone-driven soundtrack may be just the ticket. I, for one, would rather hear Yanni's intro theme to CBS's coverage of golf.

-Norberto Gomez, Jr.



MODEL CITIZEN
THE INNER FOOL
BENT RAIL FOUNDATION RECORDS

Eccentric punk is the term I've coined to describe Model Citizen. The group blends elements of early angst-ridden punk rock with classic rock beats. If The Rolling Stones were to form a band with Dead Kennedys, it would probably sound something like Model Citizen. Catchy melodies that are aggressive in nature makes for one solid album.

-ADF



MOMENTS IN GRACE
MOONLIGHT SURVIVED
ATLANTIC

I am going to just say it, get it off my chest: the best thing about this up-and-coming band is, without a doubt, vocalist/guitarist Jeremy Griffith. Everyone will agree. Their publicist, their label, their A&R guy, their oldest and newest fans they all agree. You'd think that a voice like that would be enough, but, amazingly, Moments in Grace has more going for them. An emotional, melodic rock sound accompanies the beautiful voice, making a perfect match. MOONLIGHT SURVIVED is not MIG's first offering (it follows a rough demo), but it is their first release on their new label, Salad Days/Atlantic. This combination of powerful music and powerhouse label will definitely bring Moments in Grace the recognition and distribution they deserve. www.momentsingrace.com

-Chow



MOONLIGHT GHETTO
PROGRESSIVE DARKNESS
NAVARRE

Moonlight is a Canadian metal troupe whose sound encompasses many different genres of metal, from the darker-edged keyboard-laden to classic, guitar-led, valiant metal to folksy, forest-esque stuff usually in the span of one song. On the outfit's seven-track release, the epic songwriting is an imperative: only one song is under five minutes long. This device serves to place the listener on a fantastic, metallic journey that melds traditional metal with some more progressive and experimental elements. If you've got the attention span and the ability to appreciate detail, or if Dream Theater is your favorite band but you dig Satyricon and Cradle of Filth, too, then PROGRESSIVE DARKNESS is right up your alley.

-Mike SOS



MORNING 40 FEDERATION
MORNING 40 FEDERATION
M80 MUSIC

This New Orleans-based troupe's raw and throbbing dirt-funk trades do for music what eating meat off of still-living animals did for culinary arts. This is the filthiest beast in the kingdom of dirty funk rock, no question, and it's produced exclusively for grungy folks who frequent strip bars after nightfall to get shit-faced on warm scotch and steal toilet paper from the bathroom. In fact, an analogy between Morning 40 Federation's gloriously drunken sing-alongs and toilet tissue may indeed be drawn. Clearly, the abrasiveness of muddy romps such as Gotta Nickle and Headlamp cannot be aligned in any way with that quilted and triple-layered stuff. Nah, it's more like that prison-issue, single-layer shit that doubles for cardstock and rubs you like a ball of smoldering hot thumbtacks. At first you kind of hate it, but then you're all like yeah, that's it, and you even start to kind of like it. Wiping your ass analogies that's why you need this album.

-Dave Kargol



MORTHEM VLADE ART
SLOW WAVE SLEEP
LUMINAL RECORDS

Morthem Vlade Art are a Parisian duo whose albums rival any of those late-night chill-out compilations, with a little help from some dislocated electronic grooves. SLOW WAVE SLEEP is a retrospective from 1988-2002 that showcases some of Morthem Vlade Art's finest tracks from their first three full-length releases. SLOW WAVE SLEEP easily provides some great after-party music, though on occasion tracks like The Cure-esque

Counter Canter or the icy cold, Aphex Twin-styled Crimson Lung take center stage and you realize just how interesting this shit is.

-Jude Ruiz



MORTIIS
THE GRUDGE
EARACHE

Though tempting, it's difficult to label Norway's Mortiis a sell-out for one simple reason: he's never actually sold anything. After ditching black metal's mightiest band, Emperor, in 1991, he went on to explore his own dark, twisted, and fairly boring creativity, which included a professed love for Enigma and several synth-dominated releases that, honestly, no one listened to. Now he's back with a full band that's actually (gasp!) playing like a real band, with guitars and tempos and shit like that. Unfortunately, the band they're playing like is Nine Inch Nails, and THE GRUDGE (which is billed as an electro-industrial epic) sounds as though it could have been written and discarded by Trent Reznor after fucking Courtney Love 10 years ago. The remedial programmed beats, guitars so weak most Republicans wouldn't be offended Christ! I'm a metalhead! I don't dance! Get this shit outta here!

-jzk.



MOURNING SEPTEMBER
A MAN CAN CHANGE HIS STARS
FLOODGATE RECORDS

Houston, we have reached a breaking point. The glut of music of this variety has expanded so far into the culture that you cannot escape it, no matter how hard you try. Mourning September can play, no question about it. The question remains if what they are doing evokes any real feeling. Obviously, I can only speak for myself, but when listening to their debut full-length, it just sounds very modern. If this band were standing on their own in a sea of bands that have the whole Further Seems Forever rock sound, they might just peek their heads above water...but not by much.

-Ray Harkins



MYSTIC CHORDS OF MEMORY
S/T
ROUGH TRADE

Mystic Chords of Memory is comprised of former guitarist from Beachwood Sparks Christopher Gunst. The band takes their name from Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural address, which Gunst found as a poignant and fascinating way to describe music. The sound of their album goes along the lines of modern-day hippies. They play a mellow, earthy rock, with multiple instruments, including harps and organs. Mystic Chords of Memory are from Santa Cruz, and this is a hippie-like album full of serenity.

-Jennifer Moncayo



NO COMPLY
WITH WINDMILLS TURNING WRONG DIRECTIONS
DECK CHEESE

They may be upping the profundity stakes with their album title, but naming your band after a certain skate trick is rather inevitably going to see you lumped into the whole skate-punk scene and all the teenage lyricism that goes along with it...which isn't too bad. After all, the band specialize in galloping, high-energy melodic punk with a roasting brass section, and I can't think of much better to skate to on a sun-soaked summer afternoon especially when said band contain the fiery talents of Miss Kelly, a girl harnessing one of the best female vocals in punk rock today (definitely up there with Tsunami Bomb's Agent M, but with maybe a bit more pissed-off attitude). Yeah, I can see ya smilin'! Sounds good, doesn't it? Then get this!

-Mathew Hocking



NORMAL LIKE YOU
THE WORST OF MANY FLAWS
SELF-RELEASED

Normal like You is just awful. Hanson meets Linkin Park. This is a five-song EP that is five songs too long. Their bio stresses how successful they are on mp3.com's San Francisco region so watch out!...I guess. Does mp3.com really mean anything? Who cares? Normal like You's music is so boring and uncreative, and yet for some reason lots of people have apparently downloaded it (and hopefully deleted it). And now, because of them, I'm sitting here being tortured by this wall of doldrums and bland pop. (Then again, I have nothing better to do.)

-chad



NO SUBSTANCE
TEACH KIDS TO HATE
MILLIEPEED

Ha ha, this is awesome! Not in a polished, musically proficient way, but in an inexperienced, totally DIY, give-it-all-you've-got punk rock kinda way. From the time-consuming cut 'n paste layout to the hand-scratched label logo to the cool little rambling message about the band and this recording in the sleeve (This artwork is really getting stressful I have to be at Ben's house in a couple of hours to get it all scanned in and finalized. Since when was punk rock supposed to feel like homework?), this record oozes a true do-it-yourself attitude. Musically, there are no surprises, bashing out thoroughly basic, raspy-throated punk that, okay, you wouldn't go out of your way to find; but after soaking up the passion behind the whole package, you can't help but fall in love with them. They personally asked me to include their e-mail in a hand-written note, so here it is:

-Mathew Hocking

i want them to bring back the 8-track.



ODD PROJECT THE SECOND HAND STOPPED INDIANOLA

A big fuss is being made about this being Indianola's most-anticipated and -requested new release in some time. For the life of me, I cannot figure out what the appeal is. This sounds identical to any screamo/metalcore-lite band currently annoying me. There's nothing new or original on THE SECOND HAND STOPPED. Fans of Boys Night Out, From Autumn to Ashes, Alexisonfire, Norma Jean, and Eighteen Visions (should I go on?) will probably drop a load or kickbox or whatever to these 10 songs, but I'm left feeling generally ambivalent towards this disc. I like the full-on death sections, but when they kick back into wimp-core, they just lose it for me. If it was all death (or all wimpy), hey, I'm there, but this is a band with a severe identity crisis.

-Jason Schreurs



OSTINATO LEFT TOO FAR BEHIND EXILE ON MAINSTREAM RECORDS

The debut full-length CD from this Arlington, VA-based prog-rock trio is a sonic adventure into an intricate world of the band's own making. With slow, plodding development, Ostinato's songs build to a level of complication and exhilaration that few bands can match. The fact that Ostinato was signed by a German label gives this band a definite edge in a business where an American label would pressure the band to put out a pop tune once in a while. The Germans thrive on complex orchestral-type tunes with pretentious choral work (much like Wagnerian opera). The sheer quantity of noise that this trio of musicians packs into a song is amazing. This album may not appeal to pop/punk enthusiasts, but for those who enjoy Coheed and Cambria, Pink Floyd, and Radiohead, this is a godsend.

-DUG



PINES SELF-TITLED GREY FLIGHT RECORDS

The debut EP from this Illinois-based stoner trio is an instrumental gem that dredges up memories of Rush and Black Sabbath in their salad days. The only real problem with the four catchy tunes on this ear-splitting retro romp is the lack of a Geddy Lee or an Ozzy to give these songs some substance. A band can come up with all the great rock riffs in the world, and unless it can meet the competence level of Alvin Lee or Jeff Beck, there is no way it can pull off a purely instrumental set. What we're left with here is three wasted guys playing some great rock n' roll in a basement somewhere, just waiting for a lead singer to show up.

-DUG



THE PAPER CHAMPIONS WEEKEND OF COMPROMISE REASON Y RECORDS

In this debut release from The Paper Champions, the listener is struck with many trite tunes that you can hear from just about any band of the emo-rock genre today. They don't really break any new ground, and hardly any of it is memorable. Not to rip on these guys, but I truthfully found nothing redeeming in the time I spent listening to this record. I suppose if you like Thursday and The Starting Line that you might be into this, but I wouldn't recommend it.

-Hibb



PAUL BRILL NEW PAGAN LOVE SONG SCARLET SHAME RECORDS

This record plays out beautifully from beginning to end. Brill has written some fantastic indie-pop tunes with a few electronic touches scattered throughout. I gathered interesting lyrics and fun song structures for a surprisingly enjoyable listen. There's a lot of replay value here, too, as none of the songs seem to become played out. I recommend this for fans of Her Space Holiday, The Shins, and The Fruit Bats.

-Hibb



PONIES IN THE SURF A DEMONSTRATION EARLY MORNING LATE NIGHT

The first release from siblings Camille and Alexander McGregor is a soft and poignant slap in the face. With callous disregard for current trends and commercial markets, this Boston duo has crafted a seven-song disc of the music they believe their grandparents would have loved. The songs are candy-sweet, with soft acoustic guitar, the occasional bongo rhythm, and lyrics that sound as if they were lifted from early-60s pop charts. There is the quirky and bizarre here, with tracks such as Je T'aime (which came from their 10-year-old niece), More to Living (which was a 1966 folk spiritual), and Sweet and Low (which is their attempt to write a commercial jingle). The McGregors' talent is obvious, their vision is endless, and this record is, well, both bizarre and cool.

-DUG



PUNK ROCK IS YOUR FRIEND 5 KUNG FU RECORDS SAMPLER # 5 KUNG FU RECORDS

29 tracks, five videos for only \$3.98. That's such a good deal! This compilation is pretty good, too. Kung Fu has some really cool bands on their roster. There's some heavy metal tracks, punk-rock tracks, dance tracks, some new tracks, some old tracks, and some remixed tracks. There's something for everyone and it's fun. And it's only \$3.98! Some of the bands included are Tsunami Bomb, No Use for a Name, Ozma, Stiff Little Fingers, The Vandals, Adolescents, and Guttermouth so you know what you're getting into.

-chad



RECESS RECESS SELF-RELEASED

Recess has climbed in a time-traveling machine and brought back with them a little Bad Finger meets a modish version of blues rock. This promo disc contains Recess EP STRIKE WHILE THE IRON IS HOT! and six never-before-released tracks. Part of me likes this disc because it is familiar. The group isn't moving the art form an inch...which means part of me hates it as a rip-off and idea-free junk. But that's why I'm an asshole. If you don't mind the time warp, you will love Recess. Recess is a fine band with style. I have just heard it all before. I think that's the point.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



REMEMBERING NEVER WOMEN AND CHILDREN DIE FIRST FERRET

Remembering Never is on a mission to sanctify the scene, and they've even gone so far to start by blaming themselves for the lack of hardcore purity in the genre today. The remedy, according to this Florida-based quintet, is to be as abrasive as necessary while espousing the virtues and morals of a band on the mend and questioning the meaning of it all. Centered around riffs that churn, burn, and pound with efficient aggression, this 10-track endeavor combines the dissonance of Poison the Well with the sheer brutality of bands like Norma Jean and Darkest Hour. Metalcore fans will rejoice over the indulgent twin-guitar pummeling, while those who enjoy music with a conscience will find vocalist Mean Pete's screamed sermons a welcome addition to the band's arsenal. Showing more concern than your average outfit, Remembering Never's newfound direction should find the band making fans and friends that crave socially-aware yet relentlessly musical savagery.

-Mike SOS



RENMINBI THE GREAT LEAP EP OLIVE JUICE MUSIC

Renminbi are a NY trio that artfully works a quiet-to-loud experimental indie rock vibe that may appeal to fans of Sonic Youth, Mogwai, or The Rum Diary. This EP has all the free-form flow of an avant-garde jazz record; from the moody electro tinged Electronika to the offbeat song structured Call & Response to the not grrl flavor (complete with layered vocals) of Chant Song. This is definitely not instant pleasure but given a repeated listen or two this could grow on you faster than a stubborn pimple. Hey, don't take my word for it, see for yourself at renminbiny.com

-Jude Ruiz



RESILIENCE SOUND OF STRENGTH SOS RECORDS

Having shared a stage with punk giants like Agnostic Front, The Business, T.S.O.L., and The Casualties, Resilience are one five-piece combo that prove they can hold their own with the heavy hitters of punk. As classic as classic hard punk can get, Resilience kicks out some street punk and sing-along Oi! anthems for this, their sophomore release. With all the yelling going on, SOUND OF STRENGTH should have what it takes to get you worthless punks moshing in no time. resiliencepuncx.org

-Jude Ruiz



RESPIRA THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU HAD PLANNED GREY FLIGHT RECORDS

A five-track EP, THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU HAD PLANNED is some vibrant emo, without compromising its ability to get a little mushy. Most tracks (such as A Brief Conversation and The Least Self Destructive Self Destructive Thing You Could Do) start as if they're yielding, and then swing into minor-chord electric guitars and percussion. But true to emo, there are those moments of contemplation when it seems like the band just plopped themselves on a sofa. THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU HAD PLANNED may not be all you want or what you had planned but it's something to be made welcome

-Darren Ratner



ROCKSCAR S/T UNDERTONE

Coming from Seattle, RockScar is the sort of grunge-revival band that half of us hoped for and the other half wore extra garlic around their necks to stave off. In any case, this EP isn't all bad, with some elements of Nirvana and basic punk roots (la The Ramones) placed somewhere in there.

-Hibb



RWAKE

IF YOU WALK BEFORE YOU CRAWL, YOU CRAWL BEFORE YOU DIE? AT A LOSS

Crusty metal at its most visceral is the handiwork of Rwake, a sextet from Arkansas that employ two lead singers (but not in the Linkin Park way). While sinister stoner riffs flow through the twin-guitar onslaught (la Judas Priest back in the day), one singer tears a lung out with screams of agony, while the other follows suit. They're armed with a sampler and a Moog for some texture. And texture is what you get throughout this album, as Rwake evolve from the dark acoustic guitar intro of Sleep and Forget Forever to sludgy dissonance on Woodson Lateral with the greatest of ease. If you're looking for an album to slap you around some while blowing your mind, then Rwake's latest release is the one to get.

-Mike SOS

i wrote better lyrics in third grade.



SAINT VITUS

V

SOUTHERN LORD

Saint Vitus, along with Trouble and The Obsessed, were the seminal American doom acts, dutifully holding the torch passed down by the mighty Black Sabbath. The re-release of the band's eight-track metal opus is like receiving an early Christmas present for stoners everywhere. The churning yet subtle grooves found on V are without question some of today's stoner rockers main influence, and to hear the incendiary Wino in the early years is a treat for all who worship heavy music. Laden with sludge and chock full of the sounds that have shaped metal music for over a decade, Southern Lord has done a fine job of bringing a band into the limelight and allowing an unsung musical group its just desserts.

-Mike SOS



SASQUATCH

SASQUATCH

SMALL STONE

The debut release by this trio boasts a Leonard Nimoy sound clip from the cult sci-fi expose IN SEARCH OF, and from there Sasquatch kicks into high gear. Syrupy sweet la Kyuss and Nebula and bottom-heavy like Fireball Ministry and Fu Manchu, this 10-track offering is long on heavy rock anthems like Knuckle Down and Dragonfly, whose guitars chug with unabashed fury and whose rhythms are as groovy as a freshly-paved highway. Fighting the good rock n roll fight, Sasquatch's hard-rockin' 70s feel and slight reprise of the psychedelic gel together masterfully, giving your head and heart alike bold thrusts of real rock swagger.

-Mike SOS



SCORPIONS

UNBREAKABLE

SANCTUARY

German metal stalwarts Scorpions have returned with a new album that finds the long-running outfit sounding as current as a band on its 35th year of existence can. UNBREAKABLE is billed as the band's return to the glorious metal sounds which yielded hits like Rock You Like a Hurricane and Blackout, and while that sounds like an unrealistic goal, you can't deny how good vocalist Klaus Meine still sounds for a man in his early 60s, especially on the harder-edged numbers like the first single Love Em or Leave Em. The classic Scorpions guitar stomp of master axemen Matthias Jabs and Rudolf Schenker is also prevalent here, as tracks such as the driving Borderline and fast-paced Blood Too Hot are the heaviest cuts the band has recorded in over a decade. Armed with new blood on bass and drums (Pawel Maciwoda and James Kottak, respectively), these Scorpions still possess the sting that made the group an international metal sensation.

-Mike SOS



SECOND AUDIO PROGRAM

S/T

SDI

Heavily influenced by Linkin Park and even traces of Evanescence, Second Audio Program just could be the next big thing on MTV. The songs have depth to them, and while not to my liking, they do contain a certain appeal that I'm sure fans of the alternative-rock genre would enjoy. Check out to hear for yourself.

-Hibb



wannabe reviewer: Josten

DESCRIPTION OF HOW I EAT: Marcobiotics...Madonna made me do it.
WHAT I CAN DO WITH MY MOUTH: I Make you and I better friends..
I TRY TO ALWAYS: Steal something good after every one night stand.



SHAVE

TRANS UNIVERSAL WORLDWIDE

HEADCHANGE RECORDS

Shave is trying too hard to be different and innovative. The band has made themselves a hodgepodge of styles that makes it hard to take them seriously. At times, the band sounds like an eclectic space-rock band. Then, it resembles a jam band or groove rock band. The best way to describe Shave is an experimental jam band. Unfortunately, Shave's constant experimentation turned me off and made it hard to take this album seriously.

-Dane Jackson



SIDEKICK

SO FAR AWAY

GALE FORCE RECORDS

This Hollywood quartet borrows from Screeching Weasel, Offspring, and Bouncing Souls to round out their sound. Mastered by East Bay Ray (The Dead Kennedys) many of these punk tunes possess a certain melodic pop quality that may not appeal to some of you punks out there.

-Jude Ruiz



SIGNAL LOST

CHILDREN OF THE WASTELAND

PRANK

On the exceptional CHILDREN OF THE WASTELAND, Austin's Signal Lost undoubtedly prove they possess the entire package, a passionate, purposeful, mid-tempo hardcore punk coupled with meaningful, thought-provoking lyrics that question society (like these great thoughts from Identity Crisis: Why does it all have to be this way / Why does it all have to be the same / I don't wanna be a part of this / The fucking black sheep brigade; and the visceral, defiant declaration: We don't want to hear you fucking preach (off Diatriba)). With wonderful female vocals, the band is kind of a female-fronted Pipedown. And oh, what vocals! They recall NY Rel-X's lovely Erikapowerful and tough, but also truly beautiful at times (as on the affecting, melancholy Deus Ex Machina, where Ashley's voice takes on a PJ Harvey likeness). Signal Lost is a talented, highly-relevant hardcore punk outfit.

-Janelle Jones



SIX

THE PRICE OF FAITH

EMBRYO RECORDS

Six is a heavy metal band that reminds me of The Deftones or Korn or something like that...which I don't really dig but can still appreciate on some level. The first song on this album is really good, but after that it gets kind of stale and blah. You've heard it all before. It becomes so cliché that you can't take it seriously. But I do believe there's potential here! Heavy rock fans would dig them, I think.

-chad



SKINKRAWL

DEMO

SELF-PRODUCED

Skinkrawl's demo (dedicated to those who welcome suicidal death with open arms) presents three crazy, Korn-y, bass-heavy songs about death, suffering, and persecution gnashed and gnarled through shit-and-spit vocals of the guttural persuasion. These guys are pissed about something most likely the fact that they sound like they're rumpin' Slipknot's leg. But, like most young metal bands, an extra guitarist (and a working Website) would really help push their neo-nu-metal sound to the glorious extreme.

-jzk.



SLIM CESSNA'S AUTO CLUB

BLOODY TENANT TRUTH & PEACE

ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES

Choosing a pre-60s country sound more like Hank Williams than anything in FM country today, Slim Cessna offers a refreshing take on Americana. The sound is big and eerie, like the open country at night and a blend of Johnny Cash and Nick Cave. www.AlternativeTentacles.com

-Tom Tearaway Schulte



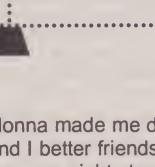
SLUTS OF TRUST

WE ARE ALL SLUTS OF TRUST

CHEMICAL UNDERGROUND RECORDS

Glasgow's Sluts of Trust, John McFarlane and Anthony O'Donnell, do way more than garage rock. Stylistically, the duo is hitting a lot of points, such as Firehose on That's Right...That Cat's Right, Andy Summers' weirdo songs on Tighter than the Night, and Oingo Boingo on The continuing struggle between the Dirty and the Smooth starring Admiral Flannel and the Duke of Blag. This is an addictive disc. There is so much energy.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



STARWOOD

IF IT AIN'T BROKE, BREAK IT!

METAL BLADE

If you're a fan of Cheap Trick, KISS, or any other pre-80s rock ensemble, Starwood might be just the nostalgia you need. IF IT AIN'T BROKE, BREAK IT! carries some of that 70s ass-kicker mentality. It's a modern look at that blue-jean, dark-shades enthusiasm that was all the rage in that decade. Even lead vocalist Lizzy sounds like Iron Maiden's Bruce Dickinson in some spots. Maiden rules...and so does Starwood.

-Darren Ratner



SUSPERIA

UNLIMITED

CANDLELIGHT

Susperia, once a predominant black-metal band, has all but shed that label on their latest release, UNLIMITED. Forsaking the darker, more European sound for a solid slab of Bay Area thrash metal la Testament c. 1990, they have made an album sure to piss off longtime fans but also crack open a whole new listenership. Susperia have picked a good time period and genre to rebuild its sound around.

-Mike SOS

when a cd is great, i get all giggly gay.



TERROR
ONE WITH THE UNDERDOGS
TRUSTKILL

Terror is a Los Angeles-based hardcore troupe whose excruciatingly brutal 13-track debut showcases an old-school mentality that so many of today's bands completely miss. Whether it's through the beefy guitar breakdowns found on such pit anthems as *Are We Alive* or the rapid-fire rhythms and seething screams highlighted on *Spit My Rage*, Terror is always on point, giving the listener a definitive mainline to aggression. As an added bonus, some of the most familiar voices in hardcore (Jamey Jasta, Lord Ezac, and Freddy Madball) are here to lend support to the cause, laying down some complimentary rage in support of the band that has toured with everyone from Sick of It All to Unearth. Reminiscent of the NYHC of the early to mid '90s with a sprinkle of Slayer-esque staccato mayhem and Sepultura's CHAOS AD style headbanging, this quintet have released an album that hardcore kids worldwide will be proud to crank and destroy to.

-Mike SOS



TEXAS THIEVES
KILLER ON CRAIG S LIST
DR. STRANGE RECORDS

Here is another first-rate release from the good Dr. Strange. This is the second full-length album from the Texas Thieves, a shredding four-piece consisting of hard-drinking, harder skateboarding, punk aficionados from San Francisco CA. *KILLER ON CRAIG S LIST* is a salvo of intense tunes that is very hardcore in nature, with amped-up, bluesy bass lines, on the spot drum work, and vocals reminiscent of Clif Hanger (The Freeze) and/or Casey Royer (D.I.). Fans of bands such as D.I., Aggression, and The Freeze will definitely get off on this one. If you appreciate fast, fun, aggressive, drunken, skate-minded, pit-inspiring madness that is still tight, pick up the Texas Thieves. The only problem with this CD is that it is over much to quickly. Its total playtime clocks in at only seventeen minutes and fifty-four seconds. www.drstrange.com www.texasthieves.com

-Marcus Solomon



THE ADICTS
ROLLERCOASTER
SOS RECORDS

The clown princes of rough-edged mirth and creative joiality have crafted the band's seventh wonderful, full-length release. *ROLLERCOASTER* is perhaps the finest collection of songs since the first Adicts album, *SONGS OF PRAISE*, which was released way back in 1981. Often, the music on this CD noticeably slower and at times escapes from the vague realm known as punk rock, but it still retains the strong, uplifting spirit that always defines The Adicts experience. Almost every song is written with its crux being the live, audience sing-along. The result being a somewhat transcendent experience wherein the listener can almost hear every other Adicts fan harmonize with the gleeful Monkey and his musical droogs. This is another album where the songs get stuck in your mind for weeks, but you won't mind one bit. Come ride the *ROLLERCOASTER*! www.sosrecords.com

-Marcus Solomon



wannabe reviewer: Tom Schulte

DESCRIPTION OF HOW I EAT: Like a good Trencherman.
WHAT I CAN DO WITH MY MOUTH: Masticate.
I TRY TO ALWAYS: Act first.



THE BOMBSHELLS
THE BOMBSHELLS
SELF-RELEASED

The Bombshells are playing a role. They have cast themselves into the Iggy Pop/Stooges vein of rock 'n' roll. A lot of cats venture down this avenue, and most of them make jackasses out of themselves. The Bombshells make believable rock. Like I say, The Bombshells are committed to their roles. Lead singer Miguel Hell is full-blown playing the part and he loves it, you can tell. He is great at the mic. Like The Ramones, The Bombshells songs are short on lyrics and guitar solos. The Bombshells are patriots for a certain kind of religion. Like the fire-eaters in the freak shows of the night, they're just keeping an art form alive. All hail the Michigan rock straight out of the garage and into infinity. Amen.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



THE BONELESS CHILDREN FOUNDATION
THE BONELESS CHILDREN FOUNDATION
SELF-RELEASED

The Boneless Children Foundation are this quirky rock band who aren't very good. The singer sounds a lot like Jack White, but the lyrics are kind of lame, and the music is just slow popish blah. They are from San Francisco, and I'm assuming they must put on a better live show than they were able to put on record. Their bio mentions performances at certain cabarets around town. But based on this album, avoid them!

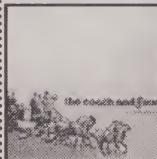
-chad



THE BRIEFS
SEX OBJECTS
BYO RECORDS

Another SKRATCH reviewer gave this collection of songs a good review, but also described the overall product as *tranquill*. I agree that that *SEX OBJECTS* is worthy of your hard-earned (non-Republican) dollar but *tranquill*? Not so tighter, cleaner, with a couple of relatively slower tunes, but definitely not *tranquill*. The Briefs belt out more of its signature convulsive, new-wave influenced, aggro-quirk. It has both intelligence and absolutely insipid stupidity presented in their distinctively unique manner that has inspired many pogo-saturated slam-pits. Starting off with a very catchy, humorous middle finger to the Bush administration's retarded color-coded Terrorism Alert System with *Orange Alert*, and ending with the superbly silly *Lifestyles of the Truly Lazy*. www.boyerrecords.com

-Marcus Solomon



THE COACH AND FOUR
UNLIMITED SYMMETRY
MAKESHIFT MUSIC

I really don't like this band, but you might. For fans of Q and Not U and other post-punk/indie rock/raw DC-sounding bands. www.thecoachandfour.com

-tChow



THE ERGS!
DORKROCKCORKROD
WHOAH OH RECORDS

Unfortunately for The Ergs!, this album is all over the place. It goes from Descendents-influenced pop-punk about love to distortion-laden guitar noise and ridiculous trash. Luckily, 10 of the 15 songs on this album are of pop-punk love-song persuasion. If it were up to me, I'd take the remaining songs off this disc, because they really mess with the flow and don't do any justice to this band's talent. What sets these guys apart from other bands influenced by Descendents is that they don't sound like total rip-offs. While the whole love and heartbreak thing is slightly played out, The Ergs! do a good job of making it interesting. Another cool thing about this band is their drummer is also the lead singer. That doesn't happen often.

-Dane Jackson



THE ESOTERIC
1336

BLACK NOISE

Released on Brad Logan's (F-Minus) record label and featuring Cory White of Reggie and the Full Effect and the ex-drummer of Today is the Day, you'd expect The Esoteric's *1336* to be something special. Well, almost. We get four songs of cool-sounding metalcore with a little ambience, a ton of possessed screaming, and enough ebb/flow riffs to last a lifetime. It's cool to hear this stuff done with a bit of thought put into it. This ain't so much the radical change-up, short-attention-span core that is constantly smothering the genre; instead there's room to breathe here, giving the songs much more impact.

-Jason Schreurs

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THE FREEZE
FREAK SHOW / CRAWLING BLIND
DR. STRANGE RECORDS

Happily riding the razor's edge between old school punk and the first wave of hardcore, Boston's The Freeze escapes from detox and the confines of time with two shredding re-released albums on one CD. Both FREAK SHOW and CRAWLING BLIND are brilliant, artistic testaments to vocalist Clif Hanger's slow process of self-destruction. All 31 songs on this collection are high quality, hard-hitting, and contagious. FREAK SHOW was originally minted in 1996 and is considered by many (including clif) to be the best from this band. CRAWLING BLIND was first crafted in 1994 on Germany's Lost and Found label, but it was virtually impossible to find in the U.S. www.drstrange.com

-Marcus Solomon



THE FUTUREHEADS
THE FUTUREHEADS
 679

Emerging from the fast-growing North East indie-punk scene, The Futureheads all aged between 18 and 21 are a head-spinning aural mind spasm, to put it bluntly. A multifaceted mish-mash of dizzying, shambolic harmonies, choppy guitar jerks, and abstract lyricism delivered with a manic, twitching, compulsive expressionism that propels their thorny art-rock racket with an urgent, guitar-grinding thrust. Their vocals being delivered with broad Tyne & Wear accents intact adds immeasurable weight and character to tracks like Robot, where its dizzying call-and-response chants from all four members gets you bopping your head from side to side, uncontrollably oooing, ahing, and singing along. Well, what are you waiting for? Go get it!

-Mathew Hocking



THE GOOD LIFE
ALBUM OF THE YEAR
SADDLE CREEK

Personally, anything that is led by Tim Kasher's raw drawl is a winner. And where there is his voice, there is his songwriting genius. It's not Cursive it's something much, much more. More folk, more toned-down, less attitude and anger, and more satirical wit, more catchy hooks, and less guitar-driven, The Good Life is everything that Cursive isn't and for good reason. Kasher lets out in TGL what he can't in Cursive. What started out as his solo side-project has now grown into a full-fledged and singular band. Each release from The Good Life has been so different from the last, from his first album, NOVENA ON A NOCTURN, to his newest EP, LOVERS NEED LAWYERS. All of the best traits from each of the band's releases come together in ALBUM OF THE YEAR (pretentiously- but rightfully-titled). I love it, and so should you. www.saddle-creek.com

-tChow



THE GREAT DECEIVER
TERRA INCOGNITO
PEACEVILLE

The Great Deceiver is an extreme hardcore/metal rock band from Sweden. They call themselves a melodic metal band, but it seems more accurate to add hardcore. The vocals are a low growling hardcore scream, which maintain through the chorus, accompanied by backup vocals that could be considered melodic in comparison to the vocals. The Great Deceiver deliver a rough dose of anger with their second album, TERRA INCOGNITO. This is definitely an album for lovers of heavy metal and hardcore.

-Jennifer Moncayo



THE HALF EMPTIES
S/T
ROGUE RECORDS

Rising out of the Arizona heat, The Half Empties cool you off with a refreshing dose of punk rock with anthemic vocals and riffs. Drug of a Nation starts the CD off on a great foot, as it is full of fun, great guitar riffs, and awesome vocals. The vocals have a raspy quality to them while still being able to sing and maintain melody. The Half Empties album was produced and recorded by Chip Hanna, former drummer of U.S. Bombs and drummer of One Man Army. Coincidentally, The Half Empties sound is comparable to One Man Army, except for the vocals.

-Jennifer Moncayo



THE HELLBOYS
CHA CHA WITH THE HELLBOYS
THE HELLBOYS

The Hellboys is an amorphous, protean group and somewhat of a prog-rock collective. The central figure is Tom Redmond. Redmond is part of the sound-alike triumvirate that also includes Lou Reed and Larry McMurtry. On this album are Tony Levin, Jerry Marotta, Robert Fripp, The California Guitar Trio, and more. The album is a wonderful blend of shocking sounds, unexpected melody, and quirky lyrics.

-Tom Tearaway Schulte



THE JE NE SAI QUOI
SECRET LANGUAGE EP
COALITION RECORDS

I don't know what it is about The Je Ne Sais Quoi, but they make me think that indie dance hipsters can join hand with the punks. They have the signature female keyboardist, Josie O. Charlie M. offers his stoic, cutting vocals. Their spastic, funky bass lines thrown in with the steady drumbeats is as natural and godly as peanut butter and jelly (or do I just have the late-night munchies?). These four from Sweden are kicking off their non-stop dance party pretty well (and non-stop dance party is synonymous with super music career).

-Mabel Lam

close-minded people are morons.



THE MANHATTAN PROJECT THE SOUNDS OF VINDICATION FORSAKEN RECORDS

The Manhattan Project is a collection of strapping young men who have decided to make some intense metalcore la Hatebreed and Metallica. These men create some interesting tunes, with certain dance breakdowns and an intensity rivaled only by the heaviest of hardcore bands. For fans of Adamantium and Welcome to Your Life.

-Hibb



THE NADS BACKASSWARDS DOLLAR RECORD RECORDS

With a band name and CD title like these (not to mention MAD MAGAZINE-inspired artwork), I was expecting some stupid-ass, cheesy, funny pop-punk shit. Luckily, The Nads are much more than meets the eye. On BACKASSWARDS, this San Francisco band (who've been together for eight years) unleash very pleasing dirty, raw, gritty, and tough rock n roll/proto-punk, which harks back to greats like The Stooges and Rocket from the Tombs, as well as the later rock n roll-drenched punk of The Dead Boys. No posturing here, just sweat-soaked, bare-bones rock. I don't know how old these guys are now (their Website says something about The Nads' family tree going back about 20 years, and there's a subsequent declaration of "Oh my god we're old!"), but they certainly got two-thirds of the YOUNG LOUD AND SNOTTY credo covered...which is more than most bands can say.

-Janelle Jones



THE NECESSARY THIS IS US FORSAKEN RECORDS

Nothing annoys me more than bands with blatant signs of arrogance, and The Necessary have this in spades. Between their band name, album title, and the lyrics of the album's opener, Captivated ("We think you should be captivated / By every word and melody"), I couldn't help but scoff at THIS IS US before I had even pressed play. Even more disturbing was that after I listened to each track, this arrogance turned out to be completely unwarranted, as The Necessary are nothing more than a third-rate Taking Back Sunday this being extremely ironic, considering that Taking Back Sunday is essentially just a second-rate version of a handful of bands with actual talent. By my fuzzy math, this makes The Necessary somewhere along the lines of being six times removed of a quality band. I may not be the smartest man around, but I don't like those odds.

-Matthew Siblo



THE ONCE OVER TWICE SPECIAL MOMENTS TO DETONATE THEMSELVES IN AT THE DEEP END

Writing my batch of reviews has proved frustratingly difficult this month not because of any computer-related problems or because I've run out of caffeine and have had to type this through swollen, red eyes to meet the deadline, but for the simple reason that this insanely brilliant band have taken complete control of my stereo and refuse to leave until something as aggressively catchy, fast, and intelligently-written in the world of Bluetonesque post-hardcore arrives and successfully fights them in a sword-thrashing duel for their lofty throne. So I guess that means I'm buying a new stereo, then? Don't say I didn't warn you.

-Matthew Hocking



THE ORANGES BAND TWO THOUSANDS MORPHIUS RECORDS

With a whole lot of attitude going on, TWO THOUSANDS is a concoction of tracks from the band's first two Morphius releases: THE FIVE DOLLARS EP and 900 MILES OF FUCKING HELL. If you've never had a taste of those two albums, this is a great way to hear the group's gnarly, Quentin Tarantino-esque approach to indie rock. There's a macho edge to it. When a track like Nextstopexjock starts to play, the vocals come across distorted, the drums are jumpy, and the guitars kick hard. TWO THOUSANDS is a good album, and its strut seemed well worth the listen.

-Darren Ratner



THE PARTISANS IDIOT NATION DR. STRANGE RECORDS

Originally formed in the summer of 1979, The Partisans return with its best ever release. A considerable quantity of the immortal spirit of the late Joe Strummer manifests in the music, lyrics, passion, and delivery in this 11-song masterpiece. IDIOT NATION is one of the best punk rock albums of all time! Damn! Sometimes it sounds so much like the late 70s Clash, that you will wonder if Mr. Strummer had another secret side project that was a bit grittier but every bit as relevant. The primarily mid-tempo and always inspiring music is also reminiscent of 999, The Buzzcocks, and even has a hint of early Social Distortion. A Partisan is a resistance fighter. Make this CD the soundtrack to your own battle in this current IDIOT NATION named the U.S.A. We don't want your cause / We don't want your wars! www.drstrange.com

-Marcus Solomon



THE PAYBACKS HARDER AND HARDER GET HIP RECORDINGS

Detroit's legendary Wendy Case (Ten High) continues to burn bright in the neo-garage constellation. Some of the hard-driving songs further her projected persona of hard drinking and hard sex (e.g., "Can You Drive," "Scotch Love"). To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln in regards Gen. Ulysses Grant, find out what she is drinking and send a case of that to all the other ladies leading garage punk rock n roll bands, because this album swings as well as it rocks. A lot of that swing is undoubtedly due to the presence of the rhythm section from The Hentchmen (i.e., bassist John Johnny Volare Szymanski and drummer Mike Audi Latulippe). www.gethip.com

-Tom Tearaway Schulte



THE RAINLIGHT NOTHING SAYS I LOVE YOU LIKE MURDER SELF-RELEASED

Never forget the adage, Don't judge a book by its cover, because it's all too true. This CD came in all its home-PC-burned glory, complete with a title referencing murder and love. Now, normally an underproduced package with an over-the-top name would bring to mind a few loud, crusty kids in a basement. In reality, The Rainlight are a few indie kids apparently inhabiting their own little world where effort equals ability. It is clear that they take this very seriously and did put a lot of time, planning, and heart into this EP. Bravo for trying, but I doubt that random assaults of screaming and run-of-the-mill indie rock will catapult them from self-release world.

-Erika Owens



THE SAFES BOOGIE WOOGIE RUMBLE PRO-VEL RECORDS

The O'Malley brothers Frankie and Patrick on guitar and Michael on bass along with drummer Doug James have put together a great five-song 10-minute shout-out disc. The guitar hook on track 3, "Wired," is brilliant and followed me around for days. Track 4, "D-Down," is a rocking instrumental which reminds me of The Replacements' "Seen Your Video." My vote for video or hit single is closer "Mental Wheelchair." That song's structure reminds me of The Plimsouls with more balls. The Safes are a tight outfit. BOOGIE WOOGIE RUMBLE is a kicking collection of songwriting prowess and instrumental mastery. This is rocking.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



THE SIRENS THE SIRENS GET HIP RECORDINGS

The ladies of Detroit quartet The Sirens dress the part, harmonize like The Shangri-Las, and rock out with a great selection of covers on this 12-track garage-rock album. We have here Gary Glitter, Suzi Quatro ("Glycerine Queen"), Ike Turner ("I'm Blue"), Roxy Erickson ("Don't Slander Me"), and more delivered in a burst of fuzzed-out 70s glam energy. The singer is Muffy Kroha, little sister to Dan Kroha (Gories, Demolition Doll Rods). Muffy has come quite a ways from teaching theatre to youths in Africa. Playing guitar is Melodylicious (Gore Gore Girls). www.gethip.com

-Tom Tearaway Schulte



THESE ARMS ARE SNAKES OXENEERS JADE TREE RECORDS

Seeing that their first EP was one of my favorite records of last year, one could expect the joy when my package arrived. At first listen, it seemed to be the usual story for most bands that release a great EP first: their full-length just lacks the kick that was present initially. Once you dig a bit deeper, though, things begin to make sense. While not as edgy, These Arms Are Snakes are more concerned with creating a record that encompasses a certain vibe, rather than the inconsistent tendencies of their previous work. I am reminded of Ink and Dagger, Frodus, and other progressive punk acts that never quite hit the mainstream audience but developed such a cult following that it did not matter. Either way, These Arms Are Snakes push forward their artistic vision, and I, for one, am happy I am a part of the ride.

-Ray Harkins



THE SEX MANIACS MEAN AS HELL MANIC RIDE

These Yorkshire lunatics put forth a solid album that will break a few teeth loose from the gumline. Crunchy guitars and dirtbag lyrics will have listeners abandoning all sense of personal hygiene while dancing around in their garages to songs like "Four Big Dicks," "Broken Down Clown," and "Illegal Libido." Their sound is somewhere in between mean classic rock and old punk.

-Thomas Murray

i wrote better lyrics in third grade.



THE SKULLS NIGHT OF THE LIVING SKULLS FINGER RECORDS

I hear The Skulls (who originally formed in 1977 and are undoubtedly one of THE greatest rock n roll-infused punk bands EVER) were voted BEST live band in Europe. After experiencing this CD/DVD, I don't wonder why. This awesome package includes a 42-minute, 16-song, simply blazing live set taped in L.A. (2003), PLUS a two-hour DVD with interviews, concert footage, the guys playing a nine-year-old's birthday party (!), etc. If you like The Skulls (and if you don't, there's something horribly wrong with you), get this release. Awesome band, live or in the studio. The only thing that could make this better is if Gold and Ruby Red was in their set. Oh, but now I'm just being picky. Anyway, this release consists of furiously energetic, non-stop action. Thank god that by the time this issue comes out, they'll have hit NYC and I'll have seen this shit in person though they DO end the record with The Randoms. Let's Get Rid of New York. Whatever.

-Janelle Jones



THE SNAKE THE CROSS THE CROWN MANDER SALIS EQUAL VISION

Sometimes I wonder when I will finally just have my fill of falling in love with new bands. I mean, there has to be some sort of limit, right? The Snake the Cross the Crown is weaseling its way into my heart. Mander Salis is the band's first release from their new home Equal Vision, and it's sure to be a winner. There is a lot of variety to be found on the album some pop, some alt, some country, some indie, some straight-up rock, and some easy listening. There's something for everybody, really. Somehow the band finds a way to claim all these sounds as their own and bring it together to form an identity of their own. www.thesnakethescratchthecrown.com

-Chow



THE STRANGER'S SIX THE INAUGURAL SELF-RELEASE

THE INAUGURAL is a very impressive debut. From the beginning of Pagan, lead singer Aaron Thompson's voice captivated me. At times he sounds like a mix between Misfits-era Glenn Danzig and Davey Havok, but mostly he just has a very definitive voice that will help his band distinguish themselves from the rest of the pack. The music is essentially rock music, but at times punk influences shine through. The band even incorporates keyboards effectively on Ghost Town to set the mood of the song perfectly. Thematically, this is a darker album, and the feelings brought about by the lyrics are aided with voice effects and other production decisions. If you like AFI, Alkaline Trio, and bands of that vein, then The Stranger's Six would be right up your alley. Don't worry, The Stranger's Six isn't just a generic rip off of those two bands, just a great band with a bright future. So far, this is the best independent debut I've heard this year.

-Dane Jackson



THE UPSIDE DOWN TRUST ELECTRICITY REVERB RECORDS

I love this band. I'm going to marry them. They sound like The Dandy Warhols but with this Joy Division feeling. Just amazingly good. This is their debut album. They are from Portland, OR. I'm going to move there and bring them chocolates and flowers, and we're going to have a big wedding, and you're all invited! I can't even believe this music is real. It's blowing my mind. Gloomy pop music at its best.

-chad



THE VACATION THEY WERE THE SONS FIERCE PANDA RECORDS

Nowadays it seems as if you don't ever actually have to get dirty in the garage to be believed as the second coming of Iggy. The Vacation (who have garnished high praise from the lead singer of Jet as his new favorite band (a fact which is very hard to not hold against them)) are the latest addition to the already crowded landscape of scruffy MC5-worshipping white boys, playing raw rock n soul. While it's hard to not cry fraud on something so easily transparent, The Vacation praise their idols with enough gusto and enthusiasm to make it work. THEY WERE THE SONS certainly isn't the genuine article...but then again, what is these days, anyway?

-Matthew Siblo



THE VOTE ALL THINGS CONSIDERED VMS RECORDS

The Vote is really very good. I like the fact that it seems like The Vote is up for trying many kinds of music. Witness to Waste is piano with clever vocal parts. Freedom at Midnight is a wrecking ball of punk-rocking hardcore. The Vote is more clever than rocking. This is a thinking band exercising brain power and rock power at the same time. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED is a dynamite rock album and touches of mastery. A truly gifted band. My pick for hit single would be track 12, Get Up and Go. That song wails with balls and class. Everyone should have a copy of The Vote's ALL THINGS CONSIDERED everyone! It's that good.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

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good music makes me all giggly gay.



THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS THE SPINE IDLEWILD

Oh my, who doesn't love this band? You may own none of their albums, or maybe you don't even know who they are without me naming these songs: Particle Man? Istanbul Was Once Constantinople? Birdcage in My Soul. Amazing, I know. And this new album falls short of nothing! They're quirky and catchy and huggable and silly and so sing-alongable. Their pop/rock sound, influenced by the harmonies of early-60s sunny rock (which is so hot right now (The Thrills, etc.)), is so approachable and likeable, who can resist it? Laden with piano, carried by catchy pop harmonies and songs that are so clever, THE SPINE is just another must-own. Make your love for They Might Be Giants real and substantial by owning the new album.

-tChow



THRESHOLD SUBSURFACE INSIDEOUT

After recently sitting through their live DVD, it was cool to all of a sudden find the latest by blue-collar prog-metallers Threshold sitting on my desk. Expect smooth, pro-sounding prog rock similar to Dream Theatre, Fates Warning, and other such nerd bands. It's that nerdiness that makes Threshold so endearing. Instead of the usual egotistical metal trappings, prog-metal bands like this simply celebrate metal as the art form it is, obsessively creating teched-out epics that are circular around all the edges. Sure, wimpy, geeky music it is, but if you can just sit back, relax, and let the warm sounds on SUBSURFACE envelop you, I can guarantee it will be just as enjoyable a ride as the latest extreme metal disc. But if synthesizers and singy vocals bother you, stay away.

-Jason Schreurs



TOBER HARAJUKU NO EMO KO DORK ROCK RECORDS

Tober are an NYC rock trio that offers up such infectious indie-rock/power-pop tunes that it's difficult to not like them. HARAJUKU NO EMO KO (a reference to the emo gals of Tokyo's fashion district) drops more pop culture references than you can keep up with (80s films, TV shows, grade-school crushes, and those fabulous Members Only jackets). This six-song EP is driven by angular math rock, vintage synths, and witty lyrics. Weezer fans rejoice! canarypromo.com/tober

-Jude Ruiz



TRAP2 SELF-TITLED EP SELF-RELEASED

This hard-rocking quartet from Sheffield, England, is one of the hottest unsigned British bands around. With a retro sound that intentionally meshes elements of England's greatest rock acts (such as The Who, Led Zeppelin, and The Rolling Stones), Trap2 seem to be on the fast track to the top. Lead singer Michael Hughes belts out lyrics with the confidence and vocal range of Axl Rose, while the group rips through material that would make Guns N' Roses proud. All three tunes were catchy, well-produced numbers that echoed in my head long after I turned the stereo off.

-DUG



TREVOR DUNN'S TRIO CONVULSANT SISTER PHANTOM OWL FISH IPÉCAC RECORDINGS

Trevor Dunn (Mr. Bungle, Fantomas) continues to muddy the confluence between composed jazz and art rock with a hard edge. Edgy melodies are punctuated with potent power chords on this instrumental album. Islands of free improvisation crop up regularly on this rich and fascinating disc. This trio of Dunn with Boston guitarist Mary Halvorson and Theory of Ruin percussionist Ches Smith presents an album that reminds us why we started listening to independent music in the first place, as well as why we found we could supplant The Exploited with Sun Ra. www.trevordunn.n3.net

-Tom Tearaway Schulte



UNLEASHED SWORN ALLEGIANCE CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS

I'm not sure if this makes the guys in Unleashed cool or absolute dorks, but they put a song about LORD OF THE RINGS on their album. While the lyrics are kind of lame, the guitar and drum work is awesome. If you're familiar with Unleashed, then you know what to expect with this album. You'll get your fair share of machine-gun drumming, double-bass, growling vocals, insane guitar riffs, and all the Norse mythology you can handle. Plus, you'll get some devil shit and necrophilia thrown in for good measure. As far as death metal goes, Johnny has made it pretty easy to understand his lyrics; but after hearing Only the Dead, I'm not sure if that was such a good thing. This is an average album that true metalheads will be able to get into I just wasn't feeling it.

-Dane Jackson



VARIOUS ARTISTS THE NAIL VOL. TWO TOOTH AND NAIL RECORDS

Thank Tooth and Nail Records for cranking out this comp of their best. Now that their best music has all been neatly consolidated into one CD, you poor kids don't have to give up your ramen and ketchup to hear songs from Underoath or Further Seems Forever's latest releases. If you're not down for the cheerful perkiness of California (maybe they'll replace Phantom Planet soon?) from Hawk Nelson, you'll find the hardcore aspects more pleasing. Just press play.

-Mabel Lam



VARIOUS BREEDING DISLOYALTY: CAMPFIRE SONGS FOR THE DISRUPTIVE ELEMENT HOUSEHOLD NAME

Once upon a time, Household Name Records was responsible for some of the earliest releases from some of the UKHC scene's best-loved bands, including Assert, Knuckledust, and the vastly underrated Medulla Nocte. Now, a few years on, the label's turned into a haven for punk rock, Oi!, and ska acts (with even a new Hard Skin album on the cards for the new year!). So, exemplifying exactly what Household Name is all about in 2004, this sampler is a 17-track selection of their current roster, with highlights including The Foomers, Captain Everything, and Lightyear's comedic, brass-fuelled hijinks, the upright bass-plucking escapades of The Peacocks, and the oddly-placed but welcome knuckle-crunching brutality of One Fine Day and John Holmes.

-Mathew Hocking



VARIOUS ARTIST DEATH RATTLE & ROLL VOLUME ONE WONDERTAKER RECORDS

Comps usually suck, but DEATH RATTLE & ROLL is a really good comp disc because death is always a great subject matter. We're talking 30 tracks, and not a dud in the bunch. Some of my favorites are opening track R.I.P. RnR by The Hydromatics (who sound like Mountain with Greg Lake on lead vox) and 101 California by Ain't (who have the honky tonk punks like Lone Justice). Also, there are two live tracks from the great Fleshes. The title of this disc is a descriptive masterpiece. DEATH RATTLE & ROLL is first a rock n' roll disc; the theme of death is secondary...but the theme makes it cool. Long live death and rock n' roll.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



V/A THE ROUGH TRADE FIELD GUIDE TO MUSIC: VOLUME 1 ROUGH TRADE RECORDS

A collection of Rough Trade's most recent 7s, this field guide is an amazing opportunity for a broader audience to hear some of the label's overlooked or forgotten vinyl gems. Showcasing the B-sides first, The Fiery Furnaces' Single Again and Art Burt's Bad Weekend are a testament to the power of the flip side; while Hals' Out Tonight and Eastern Lane's Take Me Lonely are my front-runners for the strongest singles. A fantastic and economically sound concept from the nice folks at Rough Trade. Here's hoping that other labels will follow suit.

-Matthew Siblo



V/A UNSCENE PUNKTASTIC/SOREPOINT

It seemed inevitable, really: the most popular and best-loved pop-punk Website in the U.K. (www.punktastic.com) following up on recent tour promotion to start up a label and release a compilation featuring a few more of their favorite bands that have somehow slipped the radar of the big booking agents. However, nothing is shakier than the quality of our own melodic punk acts. Despite some awesome contributions from Appear, 3 Dbs Down, Phinias Gage, My Awesome Compilation, and The Killerest Expression, you find yourself skipping past too much uninspiring drudgery to get to them. That said, Punktastic's enthusiasm for promoting new music through their various exploits is more than commendable, and this is worth picking up, if only check out those newbies you'll be reading about in the future.

-Mathew Hocking



WHERE EAGLES DARE TO COME FROM NOWHERE NEW DAY RISING

Adrenaline-rush old-school hardcore that unfortunately finds itself floundering in wimpy breakdowns from time to time. Not exactly the best way to keep the circle-pit dudes happy and sweating, but it does provide the impetus for mixing things up a bit. Lead screamer dude sounds a bit like Civ mixed with the guy from Modern Life is War, so I'm happy there. I've always liked those pre-pubes chipmunk screams to a certain point, but they do start to grate after awhile. The band cranks out the hardcore in a no-nonsense, gangbuster fashion, throwing out the background shouts in all the right places. Nothing to blow your mind here, but HxC fans will be kept content with TO COME FROM NOWHERE. newdayrising.org

-Jason Schreurs



YESTERDAYS RISING WHEN WE SPEAK, WE BREATHE EP FEARLESS RECORDS

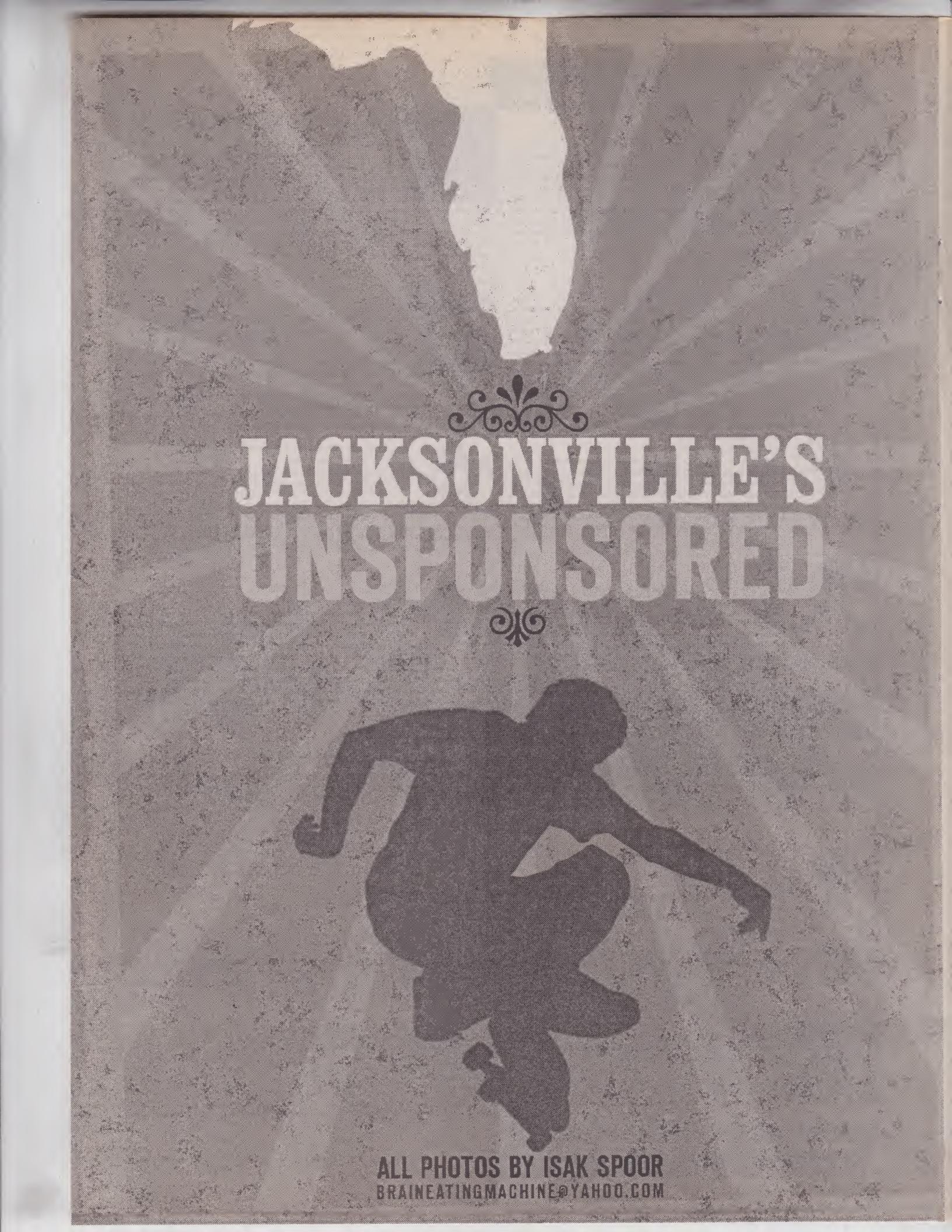
To all those kiddies who are trying to keep themselves from going insane during Thursday's hiatus, all I have to say is: pick up WHEN WE SPEAK, WE BREATHE, from Yesterday's Rising. You might be craving for Thursday, but they're a worthy substitute that will hit the spot in the meantime if you're looking for melodic hardcore (which always sounded like an oxymoron to me). Rather than clashing horribly, their passionate furor injected with serene melodies creates a rather pleasant dissonance.

-Mabel Lam



YOUR TEAM RING IN SERVICE OF THE VILLAIN PERHAPS TRANSPARENT RECORDINGS

Experimental is the perfect word to describe Your Team Ring's IN SERVICE OF THE VILLAIN. With blubbery bleeps, weird sweeps and a myriad of different instruments moving through this album, it's hard not to really enjoy it. A mix of genres also has a lot to do with the album's charm not just some mesh of unfried rhythms and psychedelic pop. Folk, new age, and world also take the stage here. It's an appreciable effort and is as original as it is inspired.



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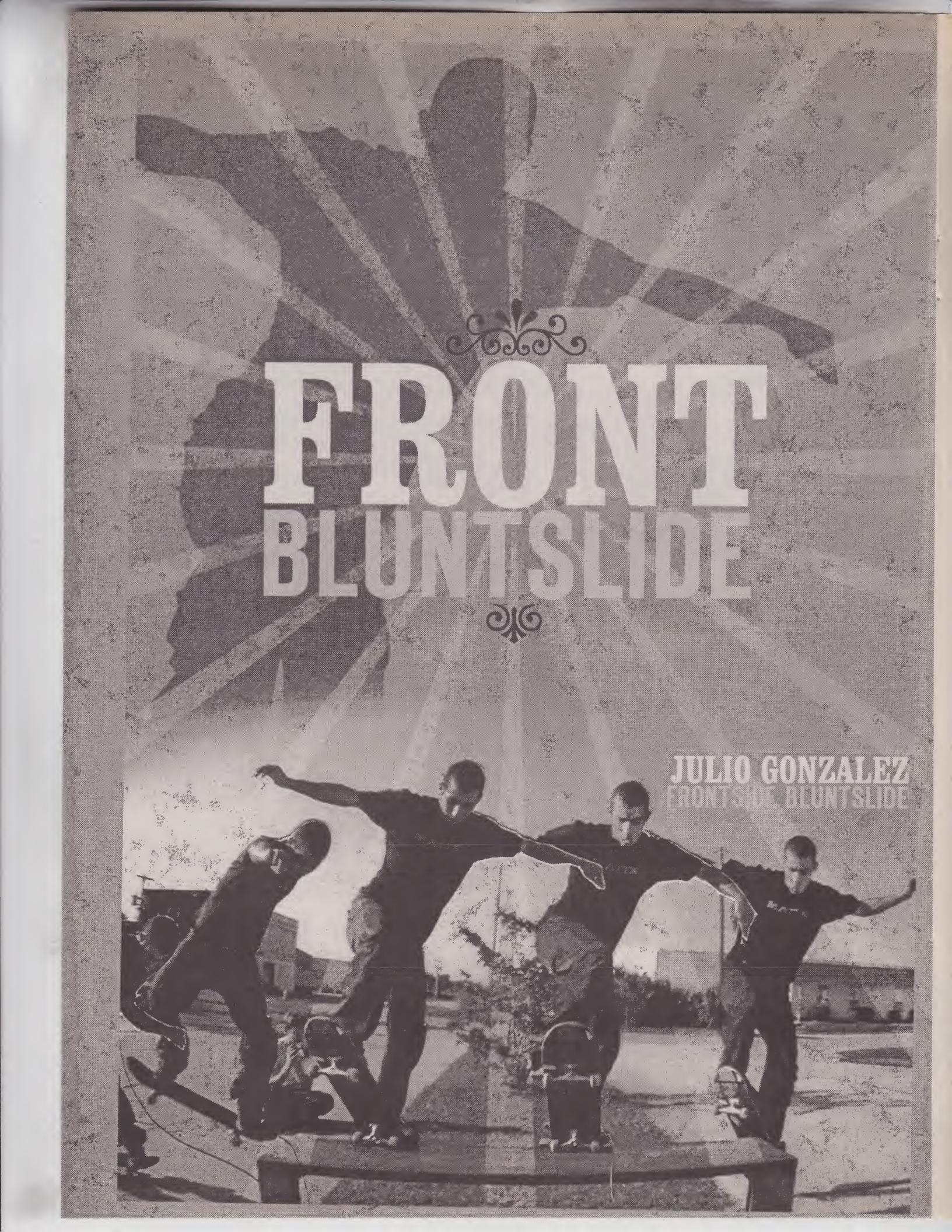
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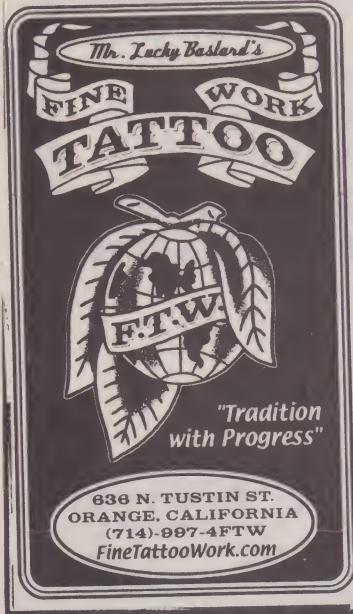
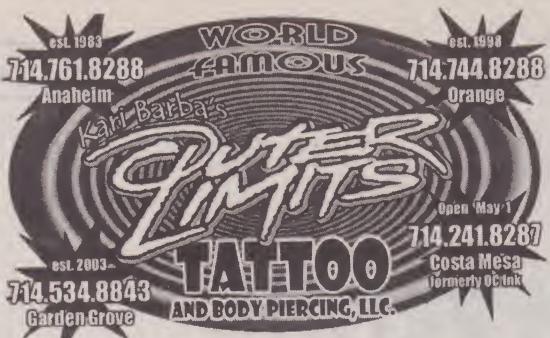
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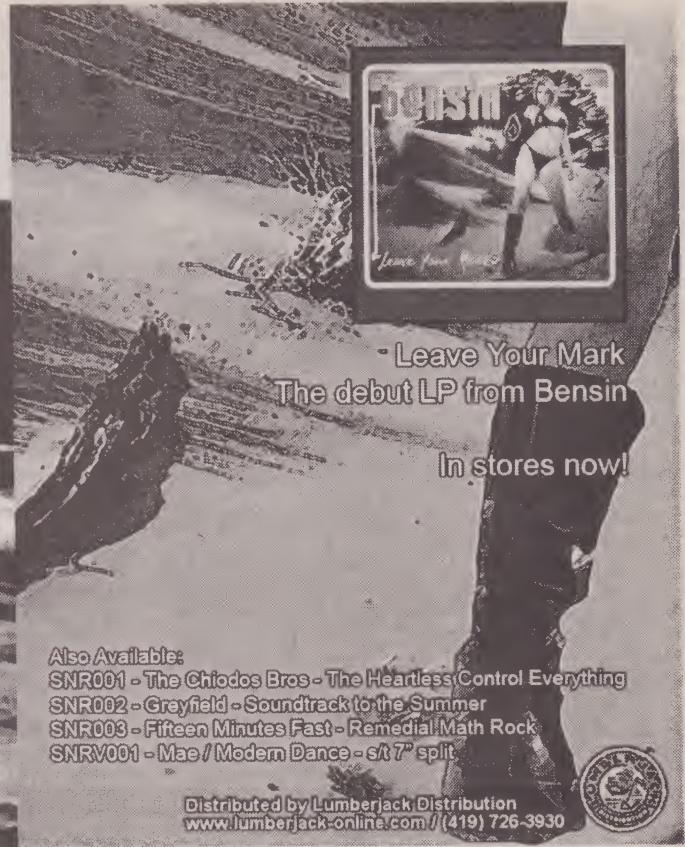
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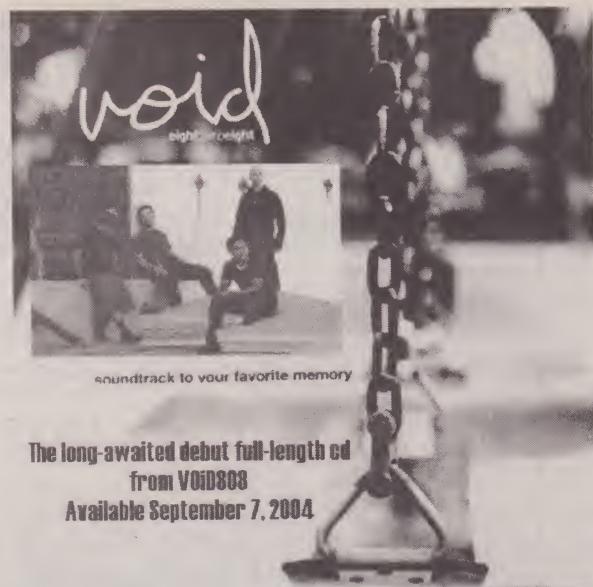
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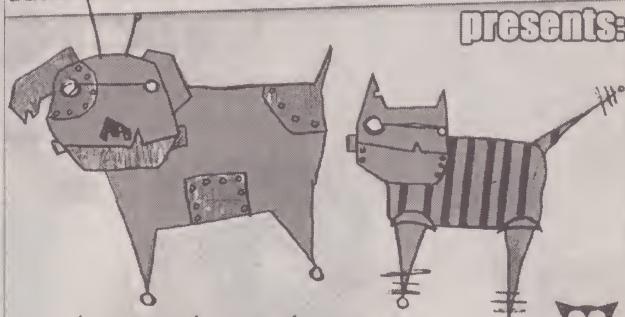
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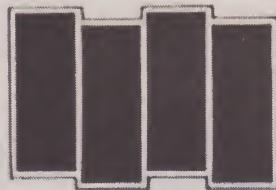


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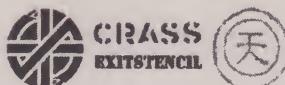


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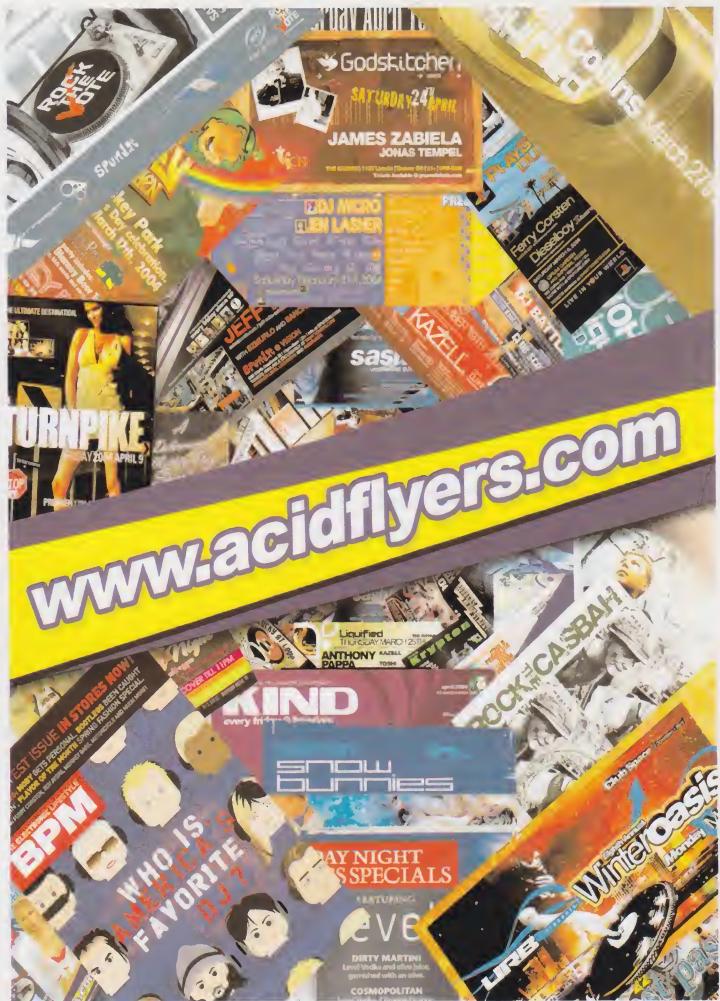
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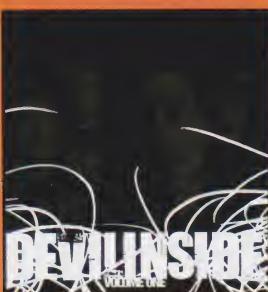
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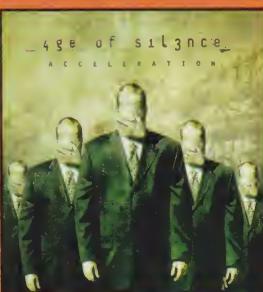


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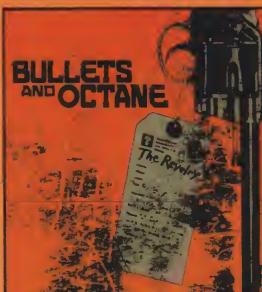
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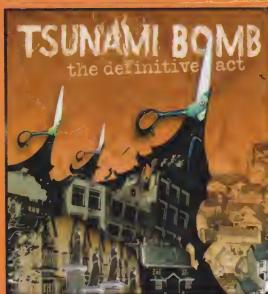
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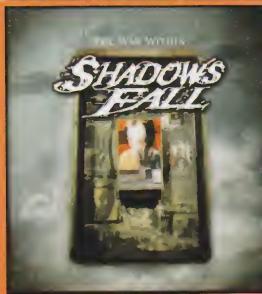
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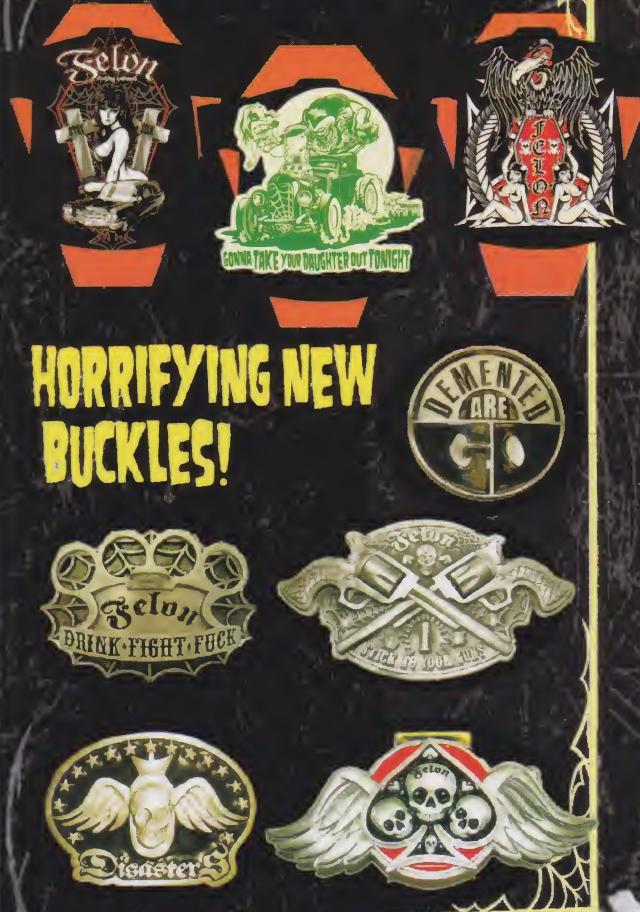


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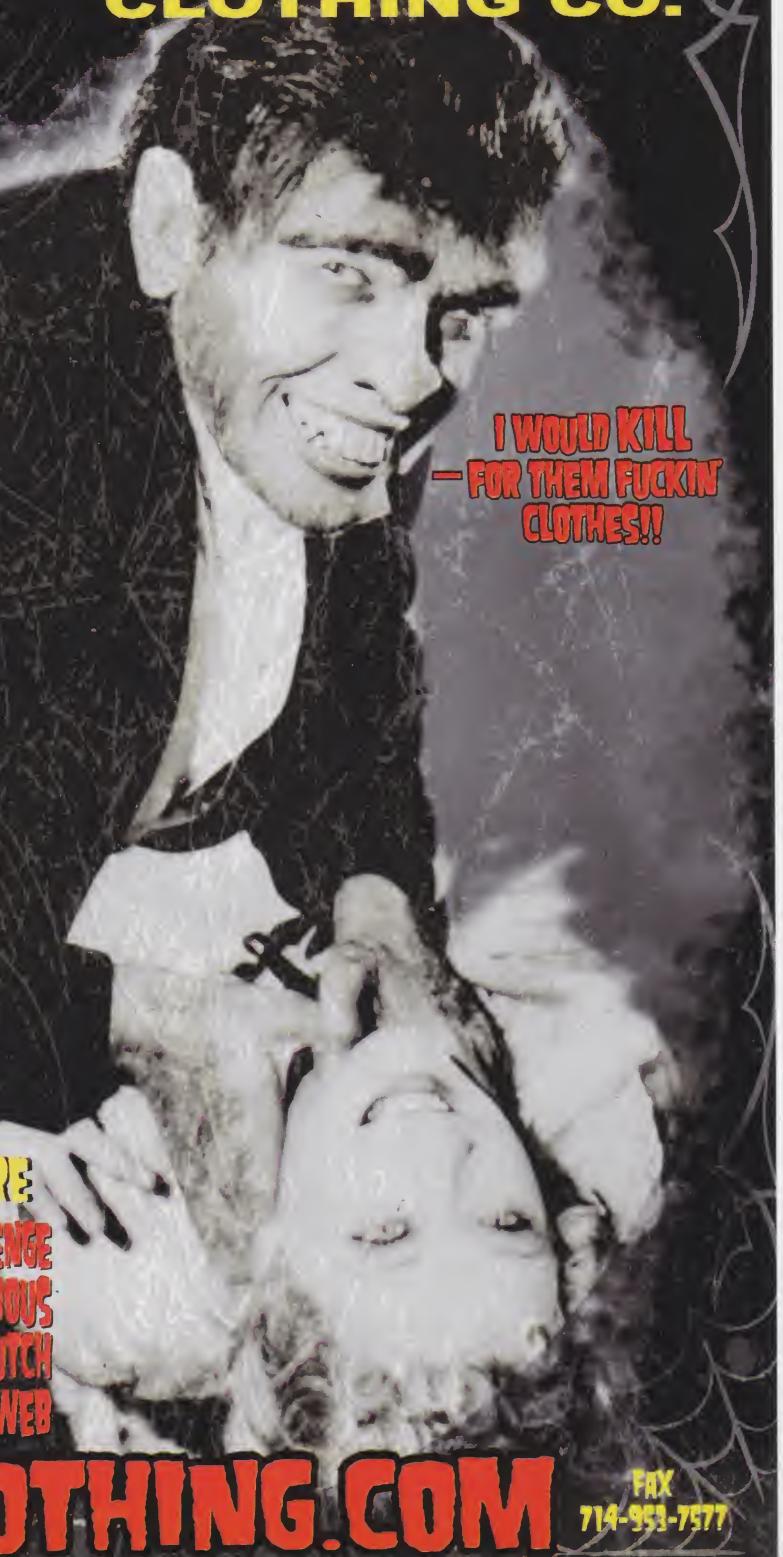
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